

**MEMORANDUM – CITY OF PASADENA
PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION**

TO: City Council **DATE:** April 24, 2000

FROM: City Manager

RE: Transportation Advisory Commission and Design Advisory Group
Comments on the Proposed Funding Bill for SR-710 Freeway Interim
Improvement Projects by United States Representative James Rogan

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council receive the information, comments, and recommendations of the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) and Design Advisory Group (DAG) on the proposed Rogan funding bill and

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The TAC met on March 30 and April 14, 2000, to discuss the Rogan funding bill. TAC voted to recommend that City Council: 1) support any funding for the mitigation and amelioration efforts, in particular the DAG and Rogan proposals; 2) refer to TAC, Planning Commission and DAG the detailed project implementation plans for review; 3) that Council at least rescind the prior Council vote of support of the SR-710 construction, to aid local legislators' efforts to obtain mitigation funding and; 4) as a separate matter, and for reasons unrelated to the funding proposal, vote to oppose the SR-710 freeway. The motion was carried with five yes votes and two no votes.

The DAG met on April 17, 2000, to discuss the above issues. DAG members agreed to recommend to City Council to seek the funding proposed by the Rogan bill, but not agree to the proposed projects. All mitigation measures should be evaluated to determine the best solution to the traffic problems in the area. All planned and proposed projects in the City, including future projects, should be evaluated using the traffic model to determine where improvements should be made.

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BACKGROUND:

In March 2000, United States Representative James Rogan introduced a bill to Congress seeking to fund a total of \$46.0 million in surface transportation improvements, including \$24.5 million for four projects in Pasadena. The proposed projects were for interim improvements to streets to improve traffic congestion resulting the current state of SR-710. City Council discussed the Rogan proposal on March 27, 2000, and referred the proposal to TAC and DAG for review and comment. City Council directed that the comments and recommendations of TAC and DAG be returned for City Council review within 30 days.

On March 30, 2000, TAC conducted a public meeting on the status of the SR-710 and the need to construct the existing gap in the freeway. Speakers for the gap closure and against the gap closure were invited to the meeting to offer opinions of the construction. The public was also invited to offer input. Questions were raised at the March 30th meeting, and responses to these questions were agendized for the April 14th TAC meeting. The staff report responding to the questions is appended to this report as Attachment 2.

TAC then discussed the Rogan bill at its regular meeting on Friday, April 14, 2000, and the proposal was discussed by DAG on Monday, April 17, 2000. This memorandum summarizes the discussions by both groups. The staff report on the Rogan bill is appended to this report as Attachment 1, the report concludes that, with adjustments and careful implementation, the mitigation efforts proposed by DAG and used as example projects in the Rogan bill could be feasible.

TAC REVIEW OF THE ROGAN PROPOSAL

The TAC discussion of the Rogan funding bill included comments or information on both the Rogan bill and the need for the SR-710 extension. All of the TAC members were present for the meeting. This information is summarized below:

Public Comment

Several speakers offered comment to TAC, and most of these were in opposition to the extension of the freeway. The field representative of Representative James Rogan, Mr. Victor Daniels, spoke to the SR-710 issue at length. He stated the intent of Congressman Rogan in proposing funding bill is to stop the construction of the SR-710 gap closure, and to provide an alternative path for traffic on Pasadena streets. The Congressman's goal for the program is to eliminate the need for the SR-710 by increasing street capacity. He further stated that the funding bill has flexibility in funding projects and the scope and type of projects can be changed from those included in the bill. According to the field representative, the funds can be used for other meaningful projects in the area.

TAC Comments

The TAC had considerable comments on both the Rogan proposal and the issue of constructing the SR-710 gap. The consensus among TAC members was to encourage City Council to actively pursue the funds proposed by the Rogan bill, with the understanding that the funds can be used for the most beneficial projects in the corridor, not just those listed in the bill. TAC was split on the issue of separating the Rogan funding from any city position on the SR-710 extension, and the recommendation from TAC ultimately brought forward recognized this division by suggesting only a rescission of Council's prior support to aid the Rogan effort. Most of the Commissioners expressed opposition to construction of the SR-710 freeway.

Other commissioner comments included the current construction plan eliminates Pasadena's ability to plan the destiny of the city. The opinion was expressed that Pasadena needs a citywide traffic management strategy, and that the commission was not given enough time to thoroughly study the proposal. It was also stated that the funds would not be available without elimination of the SR-710 project.

Two commissioners wished to completely separate a vote on the mitigation funding issue from a vote on the recommended city position on the SR-710 project; a majority of the commission desired to vote on the two issues concurrently, with the single motion containing a two part, four point recommendation.

The TAC voted to recommend that City Council 1) support any funding for the mitigation and amelioration efforts, in particular the DAG and Rogan proposals, 2) refer to TAC, Planning Commission and DAG the detailed project implementation plans for review, 3) rescind the prior City Council support of the SR-710 construction, in support of local legislators' efforts to obtain funding for mitigation and amelioration efforts. and 4) separately from any issue of mitigation funding, and on its own merits, that the Council oppose the SR-710 freeway. The motion was carried with five yes votes and two no votes.

Commissioner Moore raised a question about support for a pair of bills currently in the legislature AB 1930 (Scott) and SB 1497 (Schiff) to repeal the Martinez Bill. Several commissioners felt that the discussion and a recommendation were properly agendaized; in light a question arising, the commission voted to discuss the issue as an urgency matter. Commissioner comments included expression of concern for South Pasadena's ability to negotiate a freeway agreement with CalTrans, and the sentiment that any California city should want to control freeway building within its borders, including Pasadena. TAC voted to support the Schiff/Scott Bills that repeal the Martinez Bill. Due to concerns about the regularity of consideration of this matter, the same matter will be agendaized for review by TAC at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

DAG REVIEW OF THE ROGAN PROPOSAL

The Design Advisory Group discussed the Rogan bill and the SR-710 construction on April 17, 2000. All members of the DAG were present except Noel Hanson. The staff reports to TAC were available to the DAG for the discussion. The information is summarized below:

Staff Comments

Staff initially discussed the cost estimates of the Raymond Avenue ramp prepared by ASL Consulting Engineers, and the estimates of travel demand in southwest Pasadena prepared by Kaku Associates. Staff discussed the Kaku traffic model that is currently being updated to forecast traffic for the General Plan update. Several assumptions used in the traffic model for the previous General Plan were also discussed.

Public Comment

Mr. Mark Grath commented that the no-build alternative caused considerable freeway traffic to use city streets. Large volumes of traffic are on north-south streets east of Arroyo Boulevard. South Pasadena low-build plans will funnel traffic on to Orange Grove Boulevard and other streets.

Councilman Sid Tyler discussed the scope of the Record of Decision (ROD), Caltrans funding and the proposed traffic study. He asked who would determine project implementation and how does the implementation coincide with the update of the Mobility Element to the General Plan.

DAG Comments

David Worrell commented that the Rogan funding plan has been reported as supported by DAG, which is not entirely true. DAG projects were defined with the understanding that only \$2 million was available for mitigation; consequently, only mitigation measures in the SR-710 corridor were looked at. All impacts must be reviewed, not just those along the freeway.

DAG discussed the traffic model being updated by Kaku Associates. Caltrans has not provided needed technical support to evaluate impacts and the model should be made available to the city for staff to evaluate options. Impacts should be looked at for all projects, including future projects, not just those currently programmed.

Mr. Ell stated the Record of Decision clearly identified a two-tier strategy for traffic mitigation. While design of the SR-710 freeway could continue, the DAG mitigation measures would be put in place to provide solutions to traffic problems. Within a five-year window, these interim measures could be evaluated to determine if they provided adequate relief. A determination as to the need to spend additional resources to complete the freeway could be made at that time.

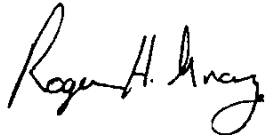
DAG members agreed to recommend to City Council to seek the funding proposed by the Rogan bill, but not agree to the proposed projects in the bill. All mitigation measures should be evaluated to determine the best solution to the traffic problems in the area. All planned and proposed projects in the City, including future projects, should be evaluated using the traffic model to determine where improvements should be made.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Rogan funding bill will fully fund the projects proposed in the bill. The funding can also be used for alternative projects that would be fully funded. Endorsement of the funding as recommended by TAC and DAG would have minimal fiscal impact. The funding would enhance improvement options currently programmed for the corridor from other funding sources (developer funds, Caltrans funds, and Blue Line funding).

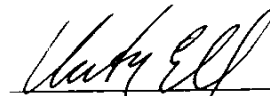
Submitted by:

Submitted by: TAC



PETER DICKINSON, Chair, TAC
ROGER H. GRAY, Vice-Chair, TAC
KJ: bjr

Submitted by: DAG



VICTOR ELL, Chair, DAG

**MEMORANDUM – CITY OF PASADENA
PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION**

DATE: April 14, 2000
TO: Transportation Advisory Commission
FROM: Transportation Administrator
RE: Summary of the SR-710 Public Forum
March 30, 2000

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Transportation Advisory Commission consider the attached information regarding the SR-710 gap closure. The information was compiled in response to questions raised at the SR-710 public forum.

Background:

On March 30, 2000, the Transportation Advisory Commission heard statements from proponents and opponents of the SR-710-gap closure, and they received input from the public on the issue. Proponents of the SR-710-gap closure cited the need for additional capacity in the corridor and benefits that would be derived by Pasadena. Opponents of the gap closure listed the environmental impacts of the project and that it is unlikely to be constructed. Public sentiment was divided on the need for the completion of the freeway. One speaker, Jess Reynolds, offered an alternative to the Caltrans alignment of the SR-710-gap closure that would largely bypass South Pasadena and utilize portions of the alignment of SR-110.

TAC members and speakers at the forum raised several issues or asked for additional data. This information is included for TAC's review. The information includes the following:

Traffic Counts in the Southwest Area – The City has conducted traffic counts in the southwest area since 1996. In that year, travel demand in north-south corridors at the southern city limit was counted at 195,000 daily vehicles. Recent counts at the same locations recorded a volume of 180,000 daily vehicles, a reduction of about 8.3 percent. The decline in traffic demand is a product of the traffic-calming program in the southwest area; however, the decline has leveled off during the last year and some corridors have increased slightly. The continued decline in traffic demand in the southwest area is not expected as new developments are occupied.

The apparent reduction in traffic volume at the southwest border of the city does not mean fewer trips were generated. These trips are merely relocated from the north-south

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corridors to some other location or pathway to the ultimate destination. The traffic has shifted to impact another part of the city.

As a comparison, traffic demand in the area is generally increasing. Growth factors of 1.5 percent to 2.0 percent annually are used by environmental impact reports as the general increase in traffic demand in Pasadena. Streets, such as Lake Avenue, have increased in the range of ten to fifteen percent over the last five years.

Pasadena-Caltrans Freeway Agreement – Pasadena signed Freeway Agreement No. 7392 on March 30, 1967, agreeing to an alignment of the SR-710 (formerly SR-7) freeway and to the reconstruction of city streets in conjunction with the freeway. City Council also passed Resolution No. 2501 strongly supporting the freeway construction.

Pasadena also signed Freeway Agreement No. 7469 with Caltrans on June 27, 1967, Freeway Agreement No. 7548 on November 29, 1967, and Freeway Agreement No. 7046 on November 19, 1965. These agreements discuss the SR-710 route and impacts on city street closures and gives Caltrans control of Pasadena Ave. and St. John Ave. Subsequent agreements supercede the 1965 agreement and add language about impacts on city streets and Caltrans assistance in improving the streets.

SR-30 Final Route – SR-30 is under construction between I-210 and I-15. The total length is 28.2 miles and it will have three general-purpose lanes and one HOV lane in each direction. Cost of the project is \$310 million, and it will be completed at the end of 2002.

Blue Line Impact on North-South Travel – The Blue Line is projected to initially carry slightly less than 45,000 passengers per day. About 21,000 of these passengers are expected to originate in Pasadena at the six Pasadena stations. This ridership represents about 17,000 daily vehicle trips from Pasadena to the south. As indicated earlier, current north-south travel demand is in the order of 180,000 vehicle trips per day. The potential Blue Line ridership represents less than 10 percent of all north-south daily trips in southwest Pasadena.

Status of the SR-710 Freeway – The SR-710 Freeway is a part of the National System of Highways (NSH) approved by Congress in 1995. This freeway is a part of the Interstate system of highways; although, it is considered a bypass route rather than a primary inter-city route. The gap closure is estimated to cost \$670 million and it is expected to carry 218,000 daily vehicles in 2010, when opened. Through trucks are not currently allowed on the SR-710 north of I-10, but the restriction will be eliminated with the completion of the freeway.

Impacts of SR-710 Gap on Pasadena Streets – Caltrans estimates that the SR-710 freeway in the Pasadena area will carry 218,000 daily vehicles soon after the freeway is opened. About 100,000 of the total daily vehicles are expected to relocate from other freeways (travel through the area), and 118,000 daily vehicles are projected to use the freeway.

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from local streets. This traffic is currently on surface streets in the general area of the SR-710 gap.

Data compiled by Meyer, Mohaddes & Associates for the Southwest Pasadena Traffic Study indicated that about 55 percent of the traffic on north-south streets in southwest Pasadena did not originate in the southwest area. This traffic originates either from the I-210 or SR-134 freeways or north of Del Mar Boulevard. Thus, as much as 100,000 vehicles per day use north-south streets in southwest Pasadena that could use a completed SR-710 freeway, or other streets to reach the SR-710 freeway not in the southwest area.

Completion of the SR-710 freeway will cause a significant change in the pattern of travel in Pasadena. Traffic will relocate from north-south surface streets in southwest Pasadena to other freeways or to east-west surface streets of Del Mar Boulevard and California Boulevard.

Impact on Cut and Cover Construction on the Raymond Aquifer - Information provided by Pasadena Water and Power indicates that there will be no disruption of the aquifer water by the below grade plan for the 710 Freeway Extension. While it is true the southwest portion of the city has a shallow water table ranging from 60 to 80 feet. Below grade excavation for the freeway would be no deeper than 30 feet. In addition, the well closest to the proposed freeway route is not in use.

The active wells closest to the proposed freeway extension, 586 North Garfield Avenue and 375 East Villa Street, are over 200 feet deep and located north of the 210, outside of the path of the extension. These wells are only used if in the summer to supplement water from wells in other parts of the city.

TAC Meeting Notification - Freeways are consequential components of the southern California transportation system. A decision on whether or not to complete the SR-710 freeway will have a regional effect, impacting groups, neighborhoods and cities within and outside of Pasadena city limits.

Staff worked diligently prior to the special Transportation Advisory Commission meeting to inform as many Pasadena residents as possible. Steps taken to inform the public included:

- A press release was distributed by the City's Public Affairs office to the Pasadena Star News, Pasadena Herald Tribune, Pasadena Weekly, and other media.
- Every homeowner's association in the City was contacted by phone and given the details of the meeting.
- Professionals and advocates were contacted by phone and faxed to give informational presentations on both sides of the issue.

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In the past, major projects like the Blue Line have had a team-like approach, receiving participation and coordination of federal, state and local government, agencies and citizens groups. The SR-710 Extension project has had similar involvement from its inception. It is therefore; not practical to begin discussions designed to facilitate the policy shaping process which to do not take into account the regional impact of this project.

Regional entities, by sharing their facts, figures, and studies increase the knowledge based on a topic for Pasadena's decision-makers. Bringing forward the full breadth of information available was a benefit to both the Transportation Advisory Commission and the public attending the meeting.

Analysis:

The construction of the SR-710 gap has many implications to southwest Pasadena and to the City as a whole. The need for north-south traffic capacity between Pasadena and the region has been clearly demonstrated. If the capacity is not provided by SR-710, then the City must expand the capacity of its arterial street system in southwest Pasadena. The capacity of SR-710 is about 6,000 vehicle trips per direction per hour. The Arroyo Parkway/Raymond Avenue/Fair Oaks Boulevard corridor cannot begin to accommodate this level of traffic demand, even with the Blue Line. It is imperative that all alternatives to increase north-south capacity be explored before any changes occur in the position of the City of Pasadena on the SR-710 gap construction.

Submitted by:



ORA LAMPMAN

Interim Director of Public Works
and Transportation

Prepared by:



KENNETH JOHNSON
Principal Engineer

Approved by:



DAVID H. GROSSE
Transportation Administrator