

# Agenda Report

August 13, 2012

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Department of Transportation  
**SUBJECT: METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (METRO) SR-710  
EXTENSION ALTERNATIVES**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended the City Council:

1. Take an action to formally oppose the following SR710 Study alternatives currently being considered by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority:
  - Alternative H-2: An arterial road along the current Avenue 64
  - Alternative H-6: A highway along Huntington Drive/Fair Oaks Ave/Pasadena Ave connecting I-10 to I-210
  - Alternative F-5: A freeway tunnel connecting I-10 to SR-134
2. Authorize the Mayor to send a letter to the Metro Board of Directors advising of the City's position; and,
3. Direct staff to continue to evaluate all other SR710 Study alternatives and return to City Council with further recommendations as information becomes available.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is the regional transportation planning agency for the County of Los Angeles. The agency develops and oversees transportation plans, policies, funding programs, and both short-term and long-range solutions that address the county's increasing mobility, accessibility and environmental needs.

Metro is currently studying options and alternatives for the completion of the 710 freeway. Specifically, the agency is preparing an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) that will consider in greater detail a number of alternatives to reduce traffic congestion in the San Gabriel Valley area. The

initial study area for the project is shown on Attachment A and is bordered by State Route 2 and Interstates 10, 210 and 605.

The study is currently in the "Alternatives Analyses" stage which involves updating the purpose and need for the project, refining the study area, and development of an "Alternative Screening Document." Attachment B shows the overall schedule for Metro's study illustrating the multi-year EIR/EIS time frame. Metro's preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS is currently anticipated to begin in October of this year with a tentative release date for public comment in November 2013. City staff understands that Metro estimates completing the Final Environmental Document by the end of 2014.

As part of its environmental analysis, Metro developed more than 40 initial alternatives, which this past July were reduced to the following grouped alternatives:

- No Build
- Transit Alternatives (bus, rapid bus, light rail or other rail options): (Attachment C)
  - BRT-1: Bus Rapid Transit, along Fair Oaks Avenue/Oak Grove Drive
  - BRT-6: Bus Rapid Transit, along Atlantic Blvd/Fair Oaks Avenue
  - LRT-4: Light Rail Transit, tunnel to Fillmore Gold Line Station
- Freeway Alternatives: (Attachment D)
  - F-2: Tunnel Alternative, I-10 to SR-2
  - F-5: Tunnel Alternative, I-10 to SR-134
  - F-6: At-Grade/Depressed (Surface) Alternative, I-10 to I-210
  - F-7: Tunnel Alternative, I-10 to I-210
- Highway/Arterial Alternatives: (Attachment E)
  - H-2: along Fremont Avenue/Monterey Road/Avenue 64, I-10 to SR 134
  - H-6: along Huntington Drive/Fair Oaks Ave/Pasadena Ave: I-10 to I-210
- Transportation System Management (TSM)/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Advanced Technologies components, including:
  - Expanded Transit Service (Bus Service Improvements)
  - Active Transportation Improvements (Bike Improvements)
  - Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Improvements
  - Travel Demand Management (TDM)
  - Intersection Hot Spot Improvements
  - Local Street Improvements

Based on the information that has been prepared by Metro, City staff has reviewed these alternatives, and believes that a number of them would result in significant negative impacts on traffic, air quality, noise, neighborhoods, and other quality of life issues, and should be opposed by the City. As supplemental information becomes available, City staff could conclude that additional alternatives would result in significant negative impacts.

Specific concerns include:

- Alternative H-2: An arterial road along the current Avenue 64
  - Detrimental impact to quiet residential neighborhoods from significant traffic, noise, air quality, and other environmental issues.
  - As currently planned, requires extensive expansion of existing right of way, including the obliteration of numerous single family residential homes, fire station, library, park, trees and other structures, destroying the fabric of the neighborhood.
  - Does not continue north of SR-134 and therefore does not accomplish project goals.
- Alternative H-6: A highway along Huntington Drive/Fair Oaks Ave/Pasadena Ave connecting I-10 to I-210
  - Detrimental impact to quiet residential neighborhood from significant traffic, noise, air quality, and other environmental issues.
  - The strong possibility for significantly increased traffic continuing along Fair Oaks as a bypass to the Pasadena Avenue alignment would be detrimental to the historic Old Pasadena business district and other assets along the corridor.
  - Although this surface route would connect the I-10 and I-210 freeway, it is not considered a "710 Freeway extension" and therefore opposing the alternative would not be in opposition to Measure A.
- Alternative F-5: A freeway tunnel connecting I-10 to SR-134 through the San Rafael neighborhood.
  - Detrimental impact to quiet residential neighborhoods from significant traffic, noise, air quality, and other environmental issues.
  - As currently planned, requires acquisition of numerous single family residential homes, park, and other structures.
  - Does not continue north of SR-134 and therefore does not accomplish project goals.
  - Tunnel alignment with the higher elevation of SR-134 would irreversibly change the visual landscape along the western Colorado Blvd. corridor and neighborhood streets east of Avenue 64 south of Colorado Blvd.

Based on these concerns, staff recommends that the City Council formally oppose these study alternatives and request that Metro immediately remove them from any further consideration.

Staff is not prepared at this time to make a recommendation related to the two Bus-Rapid-Transit alternatives noted below, but has serious concerns regarding possible

impacts to the historic Old Pasadena business district. Additional design information is necessary to better understand the potential impacts.

- Alternative BRT-1: Bus, rapid bus, light rail or other rail options along Fair Oaks Ave./Oak Grove Drive
- Alternative BRT-6: Bus, rapid bus, light rail or other rail options along Atlantic Blvd./Fair Oaks Ave.

As it relates to the remaining alternatives, additional staff time will be needed to further evaluate the potential impacts to Pasadena. As information becomes available, staff will return to the City Council for appropriate action. As discussed below, any actions taken this evening or at subsequent City Council meetings must consider the impact of Measure A approved by a majority of voters in 2001.

### ***Measure A's Limitations on City Advocacy***

In 2001, Pasadena voters passed Measure A, an initiative that stated:

*"Shall an Initiative Ordinance of the City of Pasadena be adopted to declare the policy of the city of Pasadena to be in favor of completing the 710 Freeway extension between the I-210 and the I-10 Freeways, and to declare that such policy could not be changed or repealed without a vote of the people?"*

The City Attorney's Impartial Analysis, which was prepared in December 2000, is shown on Attachment F. Following voter approval of Measure A, Ordinance no. 6851 was adopted and, consistent with Measure A, provided:

*"The policy of the city of Pasadena favors completion of the 710 Freeway between the I-210 Freeway and the I-10 Freeway... This ordinance shall not be repealed or amended except by a vote of the people."*

On its face, Measure A prevents the City from opposing a freeway route that would extend the 710 Freeway from its current terminus at Valley Boulevard in Alhambra to the current 710 stub in Pasadena. Therefore, it appears that the City Council would be precluded from opposing a freeway connecting the I-10 to the I-210, from the current 710 terminus.

However, the City Council could oppose Highway/Arterial alternatives, such as the Avenue 64 alternative (H-2) and Fair Oaks Avenue alternative (H-6). The City Attorney believes that Measure A does not prevent the City from taking positions in opposition to non-freeway alternatives or on proposed new freeways that would connect I-10 to SR-134 (F-5), or that would connect I-10 to SR-2 (F-2) as those freeways would not connect I-10 with I-210, as referenced in Measure A.

Finally, if the City Council wished to take a position on the freeway tunnel route connecting to the current 710 stub in Pasadena (F-7), an argument could be made that the City Council is precluded from doing so because of language in Measure A and case authority which suggests that initiative measures are to be interpreted broadly. If the City Council desires to take a position in opposition to the freeway tunnel route (F-7), it should consider: (1) further analysis based on other steps that may or may not be taken by Metro; (2) directing the City Attorney to file a declaratory relief action to seek court review and determination that Measure A applied only to known routes at the time the Measure was voted on, such as the surface connector, and not to unknown routes, such as an underground tunnel; and (3) submitting the question to the voters.

### ***Forums for Public Involvement***

Although many local agencies like Pasadena may be affected by potential transportation alternatives traversing city streets, the City of Pasadena is neither overseeing the environmental review, nor will the City decide nor select the ultimate transportation alternatives. Metro is the lead agency responsible for the project and in that role has provided several means of public involvement and input for this study.

Prior to the release of the draft EIR/EIS, Metro is expected to provide additional opportunities for public comment. City staff will ensure that the Pasadena's website contains information regarding such opportunities. Additionally, Metro provides detailed information about the study on its website at [www.metro.net/sr710study](http://www.metro.net/sr710study), on Twitter at @SR710Study, and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SR710Study](http://www.facebook.com/SR710Study). Comments may also be directed to Metro thru e-mail at [sr710study@metro.net](mailto:sr710study@metro.net) or by calling (855) 477-7100.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Caltrans is the lead agency responsible for preparation of all environmental documents related to the SR-710 project. The City of Pasadena is one of several local jurisdictions who are commenting on the EIR/EIS that will be prepared for the project, and the submission of such comments do not themselves require environmental review.

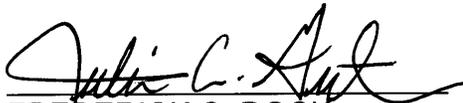
### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The proposed action is consistent with Council adopted Mobility Element objectives to promote a livable community and to protect neighborhoods by discouraging traffic from intruding into neighborhoods, as well as the City Council's Strategic Plan Goals to support and promote the quality of life and local economy and increase conservation and sustainability.

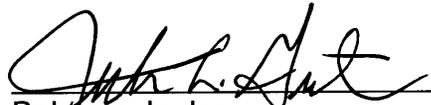
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The proposed actions will have no fiscal impact on the City at this time. Fiscal impacts related to effects of potential alternatives on any properties may be identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Study for this study.

Respectfully submitted,

  
for FREDERICK C. DOCK  
Director  
Department of Transportation

Prepared by:

  
for Bahman Janka  
Transportation Administrator

Approved by:

  
MICHAEL J. BECK  
City Manager

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Study Area
- Attachment B: Project Schedule
- Attachment C: Transit Alternatives
- Attachment D: Freeway Alternatives
- Attachment E: Highway and Arterial Alternatives
- Attachment F: City Attorney's Impartial Analysis of Measure A, December 18, 2000