

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

DATE: April 24, 2000

TO: City Council

FROM: Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC)

RE: Transportation Advisory Commission Comments on the SR-710 Freeway Construction

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council receive and discuss the attached information regarding the SR-710 construction. The information was received at the SR-710 public forum held by the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) on March 30, 2000, and further discussed at a regularly scheduled meeting on April 14, 2000.

BACKGROUND:

On March 30, 2000, the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) held a public meeting on issues related to the SR-710 construction. They received prepared statements from proponents and opponents of the SR-710 construction, and they heard input from the general public on the issue. Proponents of the SR-710 construction cited the need for additional traffic capacity in the corridor, and transportation and economic benefits that would be derived by Pasadena residents. Opponents of the construction listed the environmental impacts of the project, and transportation and economic benefits that would be derived from alternatives to the freeway. Many speakers concluded that the project is unlikely to be constructed in the near future, or even at all.

In addition to the programmed speakers for and against the construction, a total of 22 residents spoke on the issue. Public sentiment was divided on the need for the freeway completion. One speaker, Jess Reynolds, offered an alternative to the Caltrans alignment of the SR-710-construction that would largely bypass South Pasadena and utilize portions of the existing alignment of SR-110.

TAC members and speakers at the forum raised several issues or asked for additional data. Responses to the questions were prepared for TAC review, and these staff responses are

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appended as Attachment 1. The information was presented at a subsequent TAC meeting, held on April 14, 2000.

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 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, so long as they are reasonably related to mitigating traffic effects from the current freeway configuration. According to the field representative, the funds can be used for other meaningful projects in the area. Mr. Rogan's representative further asked that the TAC urge council to oppose the freeway in order to aid not just Congressman Rogan, but Senator Schiff and Assemblymember Scott in their efforts to obtain traffic mitigation funding.

TAC Comments

TAC members had considerable comments regarding the issue of constructing the SR-710 construction. Most Commissioners expressed opposition to construction of the SR-710 freeway for a variety of reasons, including environmental and historic impact, cost of construction, and a changed public policy climate in which freeway building is inconsistent with modern goals for creating livable cities. .

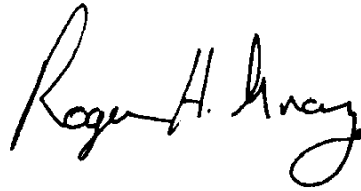
Other commissioner comments included expression of a desire to de-couple an Oppose/Support recommendation from any funding proposal such that the recommendation would stand on its own merit, and that the current freeway construction plan eliminates Pasadena's ability to plan the destiny of the city. The opinion was expressed that Pasadena needs a citywide traffic management strategy. Some commissioners felt that the commission was not given enough time to thoroughly study the issue of opposing or supporting the 710.

Two commissioners wished to completely separate a vote on the mitigation funding issue from a vote on the 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: oppose the SR-710 freeway construction on its own merits, separate from any question of mitigation funding. (In addition, and as noted in the separate report on the Rogan/DAG funding proposal, the TAC recommended

that Council at least rescind its prior vote of Support for the 710 construction in aid of the efforts of all local legislators to secure funding for traffic mitigation.) The motion was carried with five yes votes and two no votes

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roger H. Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

PETER DICKENSON, Chair TAC
ROGER H. GRAY, Vice-Chair, TAC

**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.

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.

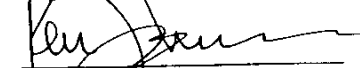
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