

Gateway Cities Connections



Working Together to Improve the Quality of Life for More Than 2 Million People in Southeast Los Angeles County

GATEWAY CITIES PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The September 2008 passage of SB 375 into law moved California cities into uncharted territory for land use decision making.

The goal of this new law is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from cars and light trucks by changing land use to encourage people to drive less. Targets for GHG reductions will be set by the state Air Resources Board at the regional level. To meet the target, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) will have to add a new Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to the Regional Transportation Plan. However, this also means that cities, which make land use decisions, may have to reconsider their own general plans and growth patterns.

In recognition of the size and complexity of the SCAG region, SB 375 allows subregional councils of government such as Gateway Cities to choose to prepare their own subregional SCS. In 2009, the Gateway Cities retained a consultant team to help make this decision. Working with city staff, legal counsel, SCAG and staff of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the COG evaluated the pros and cons of “delegation” of the SCS.

On January 6, 2010, a majority of the Gateway Cities COG Board representatives voted in favor of accepting delegation, pending ratification by a majority of the Gateway Cities member city councils. During January and February, this majority ratification was achieved and the Gateway Cities are on their way to developing their own SCS. Materials developed during 2009 are on the COG web site at www.gatewaycoq.org/sb375.html.

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As difficult as the delegation decision was, the real challenges lie ahead. No one has ever prepared or even seen an SCS – it is a new kind of plan. It is not clear what kinds or extent of land use and transportation system changes will be needed to achieve the state targets. The tools and models needed to estimate the GHG reductions that result from these changes are also being newly developed. Notably, the total GHG reductions expected to arise from SB 375 are only about two percent of the total state-wide GHG reduction goal envisioned under 2006’s AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act.

Over the next year, the Gateway Cities will collaborate with each other, SCAG, MTA, and other stakeholders to develop an SCS. As required by state law through SB 375, the SCS will involve elements related to housing, transportation, and land use. The COG is helping to coordinate the development of a comprehensive sub-regional database of population, employment, housing and land use. This database will serve as the foundation for our SCS. We invite you to stay tuned as the Gateway Cities’ sustainable future comes into focus.

IMPLEMENTING GATEWAY CITIES' HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE

The groundwork has been laid for the startup of our Homelessness Initiative in the Gateway Cities. All leadership and communication structures have been established and the Committee on Homelessness and consultants, PATH Partners, are in the final planning stages for bringing the four (4) Local Coordinating Alliances (LCA's) together. The LCA's represent cities and involved stakeholders. The city co-chairs have been named and are: Eduard Arenas, Huntington Park, LAC 1; Marlene Martel, Whittier, LCA 2; Tak Hamabata, Norwalk, LCA 3; and Ron Arias, Long Beach, LCA 4. They will be exploring making recommendations to the Committee on Homelessness for decreasing and solving homelessness in our cities, making decisions on which options we want to pursue, and taking action to implement those measures.

Outreach teams kicked off an initiative of the County Department of Mental Health in the San Gabriel Riverbed in the cities of Cerritos, Bellflower and Lakewood in February, 2010. Various organizations are participating in the outreach initiative and regularly visit the riverbed to conduct outreach with the homeless community on Tuesdays and Thursdays and will continue to do so for the next few months.

In terms of homeless prevention funds, the cities of Bellflower, Lakewood, Paramount and South Gate have received funds totaling \$4,465,000 for homeless prevention. Since the launch of the program, 43 households have been placed or are pending approval for placement in housing.

LOCAL CITY INVOLVEMENT IN HIGH SPEED RAIL PROJECT BEGINS

On December 2, 2009, the Gateway Cities COG Board of Directors approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California High Speed Rail Authority (Authority) on behalf of the COG cities of Vernon, Commerce, Pico Rivera, Montebello, Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada, Norwalk and the Orange County City of Buena Park. These cities are within the portion of the route referred to as the "LA to Anaheim Segment", of the larger San Francisco to San Diego proposed route.

The MOU between the Gateway Cities COG and the Authority provided the framework for the Authority and the cities to work together including \$700,000 of Authority funding for COG technical support.

The Cities have created an Administrative Committee comprised of the City Managers of the respective cities and a Technical Working Group comprised of the Public Works Officers of the cities to interface with the consulting teams of the Authority.

After months of negotiation and a series of agreements, all documents have been executed by all parties and Jerry R. Wood, Consultant has been selected to provide the cities with technical support in the initial review and evaluation of the current designs and approaches. Significant in this exercise is to understand the impacts on each city and exposure options which may be available to minimizing impacts to each city, without committing the cities to an agreement for the design or the alignment.

The role of the Gateway Cities COG will be to provide the framework and forum for the reviews and comments, but will not be making local decisions for the cities.

I-5 PROJECT UPDATE - FINAL DESIGN AND PATH TO CONSTRUCTION

The Environmental Record of Decision (ROD), for the I-5 Project, was signed off by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In December of 2007, the final design and preliminary right-of-way activities commenced. The I-5 from I-605, south, to the County line, is fully funded for construction, at \$1.15 Billion, and is broken up into five (5) segments, including Valley View/I-5, Alondra/I-5, Rosecrans/I-5, Norwalk (Imperial and San Antonio)/I-5, and Florence/I-5. Additionally, the Carmenita/I-5 interchange is fully designed, and is scheduled to go to bid in November 2010. Potential delay due to final right-of-way activities may delay the construction start date by 6 months, to April 2011. A large scaled model of the Carmenita interchange has been prepared by Caltrans and is available for display upon request.

While it seems like only a short time before the improvements begin to come to fruition, there are many activities taking place, including extensive right-of-way acquisition, preliminary utility relocations, and various improvements implemented by the I-5 JPA cities to mitigate and minimize traffic impacts, as much as possible, during construction. The I-5 JPA received \$6.645 million from the MTA to complete traffic/construction mitigation projects in anticipation of the I-5 widening. These improvements are in design and will be constructed by year end 2010.

Lastly, the I-5 EIR from I-605 to I-710, is underway. It is scheduled to be complete in 2012, if funds are available. The I-5 JPA is hopeful that additional funds will become available from either the Federal Government via the appropriations process and/or MTA, so that work does not lose momentum and the document can be completed and certified. There are many challenges associated with the project, including minimization of right-of-way impacts while improving the capacity of the freeway, and improving the operations of the various impacted local streets. We continue to work closely with Caltrans to refine options that convey the I-5 JPA mission while meeting Caltrans goals for the I-5.

Please feel free to refer inquiries to Ms. Yvette Kirrin, P.E., Executive Director/Authority Engineer for the I-5 JPA, who is available to assist the community in any way possible. She can be reached at (626) 644-8058, or via email at Yvette@kes-inc.com.

ORANGELINE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY: MOVING FORWARD

The Orangeline Development Authority (OLDA) has been working with the Gateway Cities COG, OLDA member Cities and with transportation agencies to continue the planning process to develop an environmentally friendly, state-of-the-art high speed rail transit system. During the past year, OLDA has been moving quickly to advance the planning process for this project.

The Proposed Orangeline high speed rail project uses existing right-of-way and extends from Orange County north through Gateway Cities to Santa Clarita. The OLDA includes the cities of Artesia, Bell, Bellflower, Cerritos, Cudahy, Downey, Huntington Park, Maywood, Paramount, South Gate and Vernon, as well as the cities of Glendale and Santa Clarita.

During the past year, OLDA was approved as part of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Long Range Transportation Plan extending from Cerritos to Los Angeles Union Station with an allocation of \$240 million in local Measure R funds. OLDA is now in the process of adding the northern segment from Los Angeles Union Station to Santa Clarita and eventually Palmdale into the constrained element of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

At this time OLDA is also pleased to announce that the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), working with the MTA and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), is conducting a feasibility study along the corridor from Los Angeles Union Station to Santa Ana (also known as the West Santa Ana Branch). The study will assess the feasibility of transit service in the corridor, examining a broad range of transit strategies and options. This study, led by the consulting firm of AECOM, is now underway and is scheduled to be completed in the next 18 months.

Finally, OLDA is in the final stages of approval with the MTA and the California Department of Transportation to begin land use/transportation planning. This \$280,000 federal appropriation, secured by Congressman Sanchez, will be used to analyze station, land use and financial issues in the corridor.

SR-91/I-605/I-405 CONGESTION "HOT SPOTS"

To date Gateway Cities has completed two studies to address transportation issues in the SR-91/I-605/I-405 Freeway Corridors. These are SR-91/I-605 Needs Assessment finalized in September, 2005 and SR-91/I-605/I-405 Initial Corridor Studies finalized April, 2008.

The result of these studies, funded by the local cities that border them, was the identification of "congestion hot spots" and other transportation improvement projects along these corridors. These completed studies enabled us to receive \$590 Million from Measure R county-wide ½ cents sales tax, in November, 2008, to begin addressing these issues.

COG RECOGNIZES PEOPLE THAT HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE



Doug Failing, Retiring District Director of Caltrans
and Board President Gordon Stefenhagen



Joe Maggadino, Cal State Long Beach and Board
President Gordon Stefenhagen

I-710 CORRIDOR PROJECT EIR/EIS ON SCHEDULE

In the spring of 2009, the I-710 Project Committee approved a set of four project alternatives for further study in the Draft EIR/EIS. Reduced from an initial set of six, the screened alternatives include:

- A no Build Alternative,
- Freeway widening up to 10 General Purpose Lanes,
- 10 General Purpose Lanes plus a Four-Lane Freight Corridor;
- 10 General Purpose Lanes plus a Zero Tailpipe Emissions Freight Corridor.

The three build alternatives were selected for their ability to meet the project's goals of improving air quality, public health, mobility and safety in the I-710 corridor. The build alternatives will be evaluated against the 2008 existing conditions and a projected 2035 No Build alternative. A Draft EIR/EIS is anticipated in late 2010. All committees will continue to meet regularly through the duration of the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS in order to ensure community input in the environmental decision-making process.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The economy of the Gateway Cities is in large part supported by the goods movement industry through the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The two ports combined are the fifth largest port in the world and the largest in the United States.

We recognize that the goods movement industry that is so vital to our economy also presents the dual challenges of managing the resultant impacts on traffic congestion and air quality. As a priority to address these issues of mobility and environmental quality, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments has priority initiatives for the planning and construction of improvements in the following four transportation corridors: I-5; I-710; SR-91/I-605/I-405; and the West Santa Ana Branch/Pacific Electric Railroad corridors. Studies of the latter three corridors are especially focused on alternative technologies and intelligent transportation systems (ITS).

To learn more about the Gateway Cities region and our Council of Governments, I invite you to explore the pages of our website.

Gordon Stefenhagen,

President, Board of Directors

It is my distinct privilege to serve as President of this proactive and results oriented organization. We are comprised of 27 cities in Southeast Los Angeles County, and numerous unincorporated communities of Southeast Los Angeles County, as well as the County of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach. Our ethnically diverse population of over 2 million people is housed in similarly diverse cities and communities. We are home to residential cities with beautiful neighborhoods, some with soaring foothill views or coastal beach fronts. We are also home to largely industrial cities, which contribute greatly to the region's economy.

Our core mission is improving the region's transportation, air quality, housing, and economic health.

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- Port of Long Beach, Ex-Officio Member

2010 CALENDAR

April 2010

- 1 Local Coordinating Alliances (LCA's) Homelessness Initiative 8:30 AM
- 7 Transportation Committee Meeting 4:30 PM
- 7 Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 pm
- 29 I-710 EIR/EIS Project Committee 6:30 PM

May 2010

- 5 Transportation Committee Meeting 4:30 PM
- 5 Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 PM

June 2010

- 1 Meet & Greet and Round Table Discussion with EPA Regional Administrator 8:30 AM
- 2 Transportation Committee Meeting 4:30 PM
- 2 Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 PM



GATEWAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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