

**Caltrans Route 46E Corridor Study:
Facilitated Strategy Session**

**August 17, 2007
Study Team Meeting Summary**

Prepared by:



Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc
800 Hearst Street
Berkeley, CA 94710

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Introduction

On August 17, 2007 nearly 20 representatives from Caltrans District 5, the City of Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments gathered to discuss Caltrans Highway 46E in the third strategy session facilitated by Carolyn Verheyen of MIG, Inc.

This session focused on reviewing the work of the Technical Advisory Committee and the development of a public engagement strategy.

Meeting Attendees

Caltrans: Claudia Espino, Brian Graham, Dan Herron, James Kilmer, Aileen Loe, Steven Milton, Dave Murray, Bob Pavlik,

City of Paso Robles: Ditas Esperanza, Doug Monn, Ron Whisenand

SLOCOG: Geiska Baker, Ron Decarli, Rich Murphy

SLO County: Frank Honeycutt

MIG: Paul Rosenbloom, Carolyn Verheyen

Document Review and Approval

The Goals, Issues and Problem Statement was accepted by the group with a minor edit. Ron Decarli of SLOCOG requested that the recently released State Department of Finance regional population projection figures indicating a leveling and decline of regional population growth be included in the statement.

TAC Meetings Summary and Discussion

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met twice since the May Study Team meeting to address a number of issues. Claudia Espino of Caltrans presented possible alternatives and improvements discussed by the TAC. The presentation was followed by Study Team discussion, with key points summarized below:

Northern Bypass

The Northern Bypass discussion largely focused on the development of a local or county facility that would serve to circulate local and regional traffic in tandem with the existing 46E. Designating the road as a local or county facility is a phaseable solution that could expedite the construction process and would require funding resources from local agencies.

Study Team members explained that building a local facility would require maintaining local access. The northern bypass as presented crosses a river that presents a costly design and engineering process. There were questions regarding how the northern bypass would connect to 101.

Southern Bypass

A possible southern alignment would tie 46E and 46W together. Previous studies have found this to be a costly alternative. The TAC is searching for previous studies of this alternative. There are local circulation plans for the southern area which may further constrain the alignment alternative.

On-alignment improvements

46E On-alignment improvements will require interchanges at Golden Hill and Airport or and interchange at Union and another location. On-alignment improvements will require a freeway to freeway interchange at 46/101 and there was discussion about a loop or flyover interchange.

Loop

A loop will allow Buena Vista Drive to stay open for as long as possible and allow for traffic metering. Maintaining access to Buena Vista is an established priority for the City of Paso Robles. The loop as designed would require the removal of commercial businesses on 24th Street.

Flyover

A flyover interchange would require a design exception and would require closure of Buena Vista. Ron Decarli of SLOCOG emphasized the importance of maintaining access to 16th and 17th which are access points that the City of Paso Robles is looking to develop into 'gateway' style entrances to their downtown.

Other Issues

Interim strategy

The Study Team is working to develop a concept for a long term solution – one that will not be built for 20-30 years. While working towards agreement on a long-range conceptual plan, a need was expressed for an interim-improvement strategy that provides direction to both Caltrans and the City of Paso Robles.

Some Study Team members expressed interest in the development of both a long term and interim strategy to address the 46E Corridor.

City of Paso Robles and Caltrans staff expressed a desire to develop a plan that will allow for the collection of fees from developers. AB1600 currently requires that fees collected from developers are tied to a proposed project with a specific cost. Absent this project concept, both Caltrans and the City of Paso Robles are unable to collect fees.

Greater specificity

Study Team members expressed concern that the alternatives as discussed are too conceptual for presentation to the general public and that a greater level of specificity is required before presenting them. Some Study Team members suggested that aerial photos

with interchange alignments be presented to the public, while other members were concerned that property owners may become alarmed by this level of specificity.

Existing funding

SLOCOG has \$7 million of STP funding committed to improvements at the 101/46 interchange. The dual-lane, southbound improvement that the funding is designated for eventually would be removed if either the flyover or loop interchange are installed. SLOCOG staff asked the Study Team if proceeding with this short-term investment was in the best interest of the corridor, or if the available funding should be saved for a longer-term solution.

Public Engagement Overview

Carolyn reviewed a Public Engagement Development Strategy with the Study Team and asked for feedback and comments. The comments and suggestions have been incorporated into an updated draft of the strategy.

TAC Tasks

- Meet twice before the September/October Study Team meeting to analyze the following alternatives in greater detail:
 - ✓ Northern Bypass
 - ✓ Southern Bypass
 - ✓ On-alignment interchanges at Golden Hill and Airport or an interchange at Union and another location
 - ✓ Flyover and Loop 101/46E connections

Analysis will focus on the following alternative elements:

- ✓ Cost
 - ✓ Design
 - ✓ Impacts
 - ✓ Tie-in to 101
 - ✓ Sequence
- Develop interchange visuals with greater detail for public engagement process
 - Address northern and southern circulation in the study area.

Next Steps

- MIG will draft the Public Engagement Plan in consultation with Caltrans
- Finalize the next meeting date of the Study Team
 - ✓ Possible dates are September 27, 28 and October 10
- Schedule Steering Committee meetings