

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

**October 10, 2007  
Study Team Meeting Summary**

Prepared by:



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## **Introduction**

On October 10, 2007 over 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 fourth strategy session facilitated by Carolyn Verheyen of MIG, Inc.

This session focused on reviewing the improvement concepts designed by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the review of a Public Engagement Plan.

Bob Pavlik of Caltrans provided a brief project management update and advised the study team that a Draft Transportation Concept Report (TCR) will be distributed to the Study Team by October 19 for review and comment. Bob explained that the TCR addresses the entire corridor and specifically acknowledges the ongoing work of the Study Team on the 5-mile section of 46E from 101 to Jardine Road.

Caltrans staff emphasized that the TCR is a 'building block' document that does not preclude any design options that may be generated by the Study Team and allows the work of the Study Team to continue.

## **Meeting Attendees**

**Caltrans:** Terri Bridges, Claudia Espino, Brian Graham, Dan Herron, James Kilmer, Aileen Loe, Steven Milton, Dave Murray, Bob Pavlik, Chris Ratekin, Cindy Utter

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

**SLOCOG:** Geiska Baker, Ron Decarli, Rich Murphy, James Worthley

**SLO County:** Frank Honeycutt, James Lopes

**MIG:** Paul Rosenbloom, Carolyn Verheyen

**Other:** George Aquilar, URS

## **46E Discussion**

### **TAC Meetings Summary and Discussion**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met once since the August Study Team meeting to analyze the improvement concept improvements in greater detail. Claudia Espino of Caltrans presented the improvement concepts in a matrix that distinguishes between interim and long-term improvements (Appendix A). The matrix describes how different types of improvements at specific intersections relate to each other. The presentation was followed by Study Team discussion, with key points summarized below:

### **On-alignment improvements**

The group discussed creating auxiliary lanes as on-alignment improvements and noted that these are phaseable improvements that can be funded and enhance corridor capacity.

## **Loop Interchange**

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 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

Study Team members expressed concern about impacts of the loop design on tax revenue generating businesses. Caltrans staff expressed preference to maintain the potential designs as concepts.

## **Flyover Interchange**

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 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> which are access points that the City of Paso Robles is looking to develop into 'gateway' style entrances to the downtown area. Ron also presented the option of a flyover into the median as one that might have less cost impacts than others while allowing for the preservation of the investment in dual lefts.

## **Bridge Replacement**

Study Team members expressed concern about the cost and timing of improvement concepts that would require a bridge replacement. Caltrans staff agreed to clarify which of the improvement concepts will require a bridge replacement.

## **Project Timing and Sequencing**

Study Team members requested that the improvement concept grid be modified to more accurately reflect project timing and sequencing.

## **Traffic and population projection request**

Study Team members asked if the improvement concepts as currently designed will serve or exceed the projected population and traffic figure for the region. Adopted project goals of maximizing capacity while maintaining reasonable cost were referenced.

## **Consistency with General Plan**

Ron Whisenand from Paso Robles expressed a strong desire to ensure that any potential improvement concept be designed to ensure Paso Robles' ability to fulfill the housing policies set forth in their general plan.

## **Other Projects**

The City of Paso Robles is currently completing a PSR for a project at Airport Road that will require a 4-way signal at the intersection of Airport Road and 46E and a 3-way signal at the intersection of Union Road and 46E. The City asked for clarification from Caltrans that this project can proceed while the CCS is completed and Caltrans staff confirmed that it can.

## Public Engagement Review and Discussion

Carolyn and Paul Rosenbloom reviewed the draft Public Engagement plan with the Study Team and asked for feedback and comments. The comments and suggestions have been incorporated into an updated draft of the strategy and are summarized below:

### Improvement Concepts

- Emphasize the interim concepts to the public
- Incorporate costs for all improvement concepts
- Be clear about what elements of the project are fixed and what are flexible

### Public Engagement Timing

There was a desire expressed by multiple Study Team members to accelerate and compress the public engagement process if possible. Study Team members expressed an interest in collapsing the first two public workshops into one, noting that the public will not be interested in attending a purely educational workshop and will be eager to work on potential design solutions. Study Team members also asked MIG to clarify expected outcomes for each workshop.

### Publicity

- Carolyn asked the Study Team if it will be possible to keep the improvement concepts out of public view until the second planned workshop in May of 2008, to allow for the needed orientation and education that is planned for the first workshop (in February). Study Team members recognized that the concepts might get out to the public before May of 2008, at which point their draft nature can be emphasized.
- Rich Murphy from SLOCOG explained that the concepts will need to be presented to the SLOCOG board prior to May as the board is currently working on funding issues and developing an RTP update.
- Study Team members advised that the multi-jurisdictional friction related to the project will be of interest to local media.

### Other Issues

- Study Team members expressed an interest in creatively using the Public Engagement effort to accelerate the completion of the corridor improvement process, noting that following up a year-long public engagement process with a 2 year PSR process will be a letdown to the public.
- Study Team members requested more clarity as to what the Next Steps are following the public engagement process.

### Other modifications

- Study Team members suggested adding focus groups to the process and canceling the proposed community tour in favor of a virtual tour of the corridor.

## **TAC Tasks**

The TAC will work on the following tasks in advance of the December meeting:

- Determine cost and capacity figures for the improvement concepts and present them at the December Study Team meeting
  - ✓ Analyze and determine the capacity of the dual lefts
- Analysis of 6 lanes on 101 including the impacts to dual lefts and how this will interact with flyover/ loop interchange options
- Make the requested modifications to the improvement concepts grid to include:
  - ✓ Timing/ priority of improvement concepts
  - ✓ Include 13<sup>th</sup> over-crossing as a project and addressing the impact on 17th
  - ✓ Median Touchdown flyover option

## **Next Steps**

- MIG will finalize the Public Engagement Plan in consultation with Caltrans
- MIG will schedule in-person stakeholder interviews in the area on December 12th and 13th.
- The next meeting date of the Study Team is December 13.
- Schedule Steering Committee meetings