Appendix B

Issue Statement
I-5 SOUTH MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR STUDY

ISSUE STATEMENT

JUNE 5, 2009

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of the Interstate 5 (I-5) South Multimodal Corridor Study is to identify the various forms of transportation that exist along and adjacent to the I-5 corridor between State Route 54 (SR-54) and Main Street, and find ways to maximize their effectiveness through multimodal planning to meet the anticipated demand through the year 2035, and to use available funding for this multimodal corridor in the most efficient way possible. Existing modes of transportation include (1) motorized vehicles (including transit vehicles), (2) freight trains, (3) light rail transit (LRT), (4) bicycles, and (5) pedestrians. I-5, SR-54, and local streets provide the primary opportunities for motorized vehicles, such as cars, buses, and trucks.

Initially, up to seven multimodal alternatives will be identified for consideration. The alternatives will incorporate proposed highway and rail projects for the corridor as presented in the 2030 San Diego Regional Transportation Plan: Pathways for the Future (2030 RTP) prepared by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and other transportation projects and proposed development identified in local planning documents, as well as concepts/projects that have not specifically been identified by existing plans or studies. Based upon a preliminary evaluation of the ability of each of these alternatives to meet the overall goal of facilitating transportation along the corridor, a total of three alternatives will be developed for more detailed evaluation.

It is intended that early multimodal transportation planning within the I-5 South Corridor will facilitate comprehensive land use planning within and adjacent to the Corridor that accommodates and is complementary with regional transportation planning.

In order to determine the initial set of issues in the corridor, the Project Development Team has reviewed various documents developed by SANDAG, City of Chula Vista, Caltrans, SD&IV, MTS, among other agencies. Documents reviewed include:

- 2030 San Diego Regional Transportation Plan: Pathways for the Future (2030 RTP)
- City of Chula Vista General Plan
- City of Chula Vista Urban Core Specific Plan
- Final Concept Engineering Report for E Street and H Street Grade Separations
- Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan
- TCIF Proposal – South Line Rail Improvements/San Ysidro Yard

ISSUE STATEMENT

Traffic congestion is one of the most tangible and frustrating quality of life issues facing the San Diego region. Dramatic increases in motorized travel, combined with limited financial capacity to improve roads and build more transit, have resulted in severe congestion of many of our major roadways during
peak commuting hours. Besides simply being annoying, this hampers our region’s productivity and long term economic prosperity. (Ref: Regional Comprehensive Plan for the San Diego Region, July 2004).

The following are issues that exist for the I-5 South Multimodal Corridor:

- **Limited Travel Choices:** Although the I-5 South Corridor has multiple travel mode choices, there are currently no HOV or managed lanes along I-5 in this location; and regional transit trips must be accomplished through the use of localized and corridor service, such as the Blue Line Trolley\(^1\), inter-city MTS Bus Routes (929 and 932), and intra-city Chula Vista Transit (CVT) Bus Routes (701, 704, 705, 709 and 712). The Blue Line Trolley offers service from the International border with Mexico to Old Town San Diego, with stops in Downtown San Diego. Regional destinations not served by the Blue Line Trolley may require multiple transfers. Many of the existing transit routes operate at or near capacity, and below the desired 15-minute all-day service frequency goal identified in the 2030 RTP.

- **Increasing Demand for Trolley Service and Associated Conflicts with Vehicle Traffic:** The San Diego Trolley’s Blue Line along the I-5 corridor experiences the highest ridership of any LRT line within the San Diego region, and projections indicate that ridership will continue to rise for the foreseeable future. The Bayfront/E Street, H Street, and Palomar Street LRT stations also experience heavy demands during peak commute hours, and are popular park and ride and bus transfer destinations as they are located along three major east-west arterial streets within Chula Vista.\(^2\)

- **Pedestrian/ Bicycle Mobility:** The traditional street grid of Chula Vista has been broken, especially between I-5 and Broadway, with truncated streets creating a connectivity problem within neighborhoods. Other key constraints to mobility within the Chula Vista Urban Core include an environment that is generally unfriendly to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as the lack of links from the Urban Core to other portions of the City, such as the Bayfront area or east Chula Vista.\(^3\)

- **At Grade Rail Crossings:** MTS provides LRT service along the South Line seven days a week, operating with a schedule that provides up to 8 trains per hour during peak service, 102 round-trips along the corridor on Monday through Friday, 148 round trips on Saturday, and 65 round trips on Sunday.\(^4\) The vehicular traffic on E Street, H Street, and Palomar Street is also projected to increase as more commuters utilize these streets to access trolley stations and the northbound and southbound ramps to I-5, and as Chula Vista’s Bayfront area to the west is developed. As the frequency of the LRT service increases, the level of service at these crossings decreases due to the increased frequency that the crossing arms are down.\(^5\) The

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\(^{1}\) Interstates 805/5 South Corridor Study, Dated June 2005
\(^{2}\) Final Concept Engineering Report for E Street and H Street Grade Separations, July 2004
\(^{3}\) Final Concept Engineering Report for E Street and H Street Grade Separations, July 2004
\(^{4}\) Final Concept Engineering Report for E Street and H Street Grade Separations, July 2004
\(^{5}\) Final Concept Engineering Report for E Street and H Street Grade Separations, July 2004
existing at grade crossing of the local roads and LRT and freight rail pose safety risks to the rail workers during maintenance activities and the general public during normal operation.  

- **Capacity Constraints for Goods Movement**: The region’s heavy freight rail systems exhibit substantial congestion and delays, as well as some loss of existing and potential business because of capacity constraints associated with limited infrastructure and the sharing of tracks with passenger operations (LRT). The double track system located on the eastern side of I-5 is owned by MTS, and operated and controlled by the San Diego Trolley, Inc. (SDTI), an asset of MTS. The freight rail service on the South Line is provided by the San Diego and Imperial Valley Short Line Operator (SDIV), a Rail America railroad, which is owned by Fortress Investment Group.

Operating freight trains on the same tracks as the Blue Line LRT subjects the line to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) jurisdiction and must conform to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Parts 234, 235, and 236. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 105.32 for SDIV require that before entering SDTI tracks, the SDIV crew must obtain permission from the SDTI controller and must report to the controller when clear of the main track. Freight operating hours are currently restricted to a 2.5 hour “window” when the trolleys are not in service on Monday through Saturday mornings, and not permitted Saturday night into Sunday morning.

In addition to freight trains, the I-5 corridor provides an important goods movement link for commercial trucks utilizing the Otay Mesa Land Port of Entry (POE). The volume of trucks and the value of goods crossing northbound and southbound at the Otay Mesa POE has increased steadily since the Otay Mesa POE was opened in 1985, serving as the only POE for commercial vehicles in the San Diego Metropolitan area. The volume of commercial vehicles utilizing I-5 and involved in international commercial trade is expected to increase as the capacity of commercial vehicle inspection at the Mexican border increases with the planned modernization of the Otay Mesa POE and development of the new Otay Mesa East POE.

- **Population Growth and Increased Travel Demand**: Projected population and employment growth in the region will result in additional travel demand on the I-5 corridor. By the year 2030, population growth in the area surrounding the corridor is expected to reach 39 percent while employment growth is anticipated at 28 percent. In particular, growth in the South Bay subregion is expected to be higher than the San Diego regional average. For example, in Chula Vista, population is anticipated to increase by 60% from 2000 to 2030 or nearly 105,000 residents (from 173,600 to 278,200) residents. Traffic forecasts indicate that travel demand on the I-5 corridor will increase up to 46 percent on the I-5 corridor south of SR-54 by 2030. Planned expansion of the San Ysidro POE and resulting capacity increases for passenger vehicles will increase travel demand on I-5. Without improvements, additional segments of this corridor are projected to operate at LOS F in 2030.
• **Insufficient Interchange Spacing:** The current interchange spacings in the I-5 corridor from Main Street to the SR-54 interchange are less than the recommended spacing in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, which is 1.0 mile between local street interchanges in urban areas, and 2.0 miles between freeway to freeway interchanges and local street interchanges. The current spacing is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interchange/Ramp Spacing along the I-5 South Corridor</th>
<th>Distance Between (Miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR-54 System Interchange</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Street Local Interchange</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Street Local Interchange</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Street Local Interchange</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Street Local Interchange</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palomar Street Local Interchange</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Local Interchange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• **Environmental Factors:** A number of environmental factors could affect or be affected by future transportation improvements located within the I-5 South Corridor study area. The most important environmental factors are associated with the following issues: air quality/climate change, biological resources, cultural resources, visual aesthetics, noise, water quality, and environmental justice.

Of the above environmental issues, biological resources represent the primary potential physical constraint to the design and location of future transportation improvements. Biological resource constraints are primarily related to wetlands between the SR-54 and E Street interchanges where the Sweetwater River passes beneath the I-5/SR-54 interchange and along the west side of I-5 between SR-54 and E Street. To a lesser extent, improvements to the I-5/Main Street interchange could also be constrained by wetland resources lying to the west. State and federal resource agencies with jurisdiction over these wetland habitats will require consideration of transportation alternatives that avoid or, at a minimum, reduce wetland impacts.

Although it is considered unlikely, the presence of historic or archaeological resources within the study corridor, that are determined to be of national, state, or local significance, could represent constraints to transportation improvement options, due to the need to avoid or mitigate impacts to such resources. For transportation projects with federal oversight or funding, these significant historic/archaeological resources may be subject to Section 4(f).

Section 4(f) resources include public parks; recreational areas and historic/archaeological sites of national, state or local significance; and wildlife or waterfowl refuges. Impacts to 4(f) resources
could also represent a constraint to transportation improvements with federal funding/oversight. Unless “de minimus” impact findings can be made, it would be necessary to study and document the absence of any feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives to a proposed impact to a 4(f) resource. Thus, federal transportation projects strive to avoid impacts to such resources. It will be important to identify any potential 4(f) resources early in the corridor planning.

Environmental factors related to Air Quality/Climate Change, Noise and Water Quality would primarily be associated with the ultimate operation of transportation activities within the corridor. Optimizing the efficiency of fossil-fueled transportation modes within the corridor (e.g., vehicle, bus and freight travel) and facilitating the use of alternatives to the personal automobile will be important to minimizing the air quality/climate change impacts of future transportation improvements. The dispersal of diesel particulates and carbon monoxide into sensitive receptor areas will be of concern with respect to air quality. Incorporation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) into the design of future transportation improvements would be essential to reducing their contributions to urban runoff. Accommodating noise attenuation techniques such as barriers (e.g. berms and walls) and/or roadway composition (e.g. rubberized pavement) will be important to reducing the impacts on adjacent noise receptors (e.g. residential and medical development).

Factors related to Environmental Justice would primarily be associated with providing mobility opportunities and accessibility for minority and low-income populations, providing convenient transit services nearby jobs and homes.

- **Limited Funding** The challenging current economic conditions reinforce the need for efficient funding decisions to maintain and improve upon the integrity of the existing modes of transportation and to avoid “throw away” costs. Funds that might be allowable by the funding authority for one mode of transportation might also benefit another mode of transportation, either directly or indirectly. Conversely, some funding requirements do not allow the use of their funding mechanism for specific elements, such as operation and maintenance.

- **Competing Interests for Right of Way:** There are several stakeholders within the study corridor and multiple needs within a limited right-of-way. Some of the competing uses include:
  - Bayfront Redevelopment
  - Bikeways
  - Bus Service Ingress/ Egress
  - Citizen Community Groups (Broadway Business Association, Crossroads II, Southwest Civic Association, Northwest Civic Association, among others)
  - Environmental – Sweetwater River Channel, potential urban wetlands
  - Freeway Improvements
  - Goods Movement (Freight Rail, Trucking, Port)
  - Light Rail Transit (Trolley)
  - Local Street Network
  - Operation and Maintenance Activities for all modes of transportation
  - Pedestrian Mobility
  - Public Parking for Transit Users
- Utilities (Electric, gravity storm drain, gravity sewer, water, gas, telephone, cable, ITS)
- Western Chula Vista Redevelopment