

# CAG Meeting Minutes

**Subject:** High Desert Community Advisory Group (HD CAG) Kick-Off Meeting  
 I-10 and I-15 Corridor Projects, San Bernardino County

**Date:** February 20, 2013 at 6:00 PM

**Location:** Victorville City Hall, Victorville, CA

**Participants:** 12 CAG Members were in attendance, including 11 HD CAG Members and 1 West Valley CAG Member.

<b>HD CAG Members in Attendance</b>	<b>Primary Affiliation</b>
Muhammad A. Bari	US Army, Fort Irwin
Debbie A. Cannon	Academy for Grassroot Organizations / High Desert Resource Center
Rick Danzey	Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors
Kevin Kane	Victor Valley Transit Authority
Thomas J. Kerman	Hesperia Unified School District
Raghada Khoury	Commercial Building
Holly Noel	Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
Michele Spears	Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sophie Steeno	Citizens Advisory Group Member, City of Hesperia
Bob R. Tinsley	BR Tinsley Inc. R.E. & Construction
Carol Whitton	Hesperia Unified School District
<b>HD CAG Members not in Attendance</b>	<b>Primary Affiliation</b>
Oliver Chi	Daily commuter from Rancho Cucamonga to Barstow
<b>Other CAG Members in attendance (non-HD CAG)</b>	<b>Primary Affiliation</b>
Dr. Kenneth S. Alpern	West Valley CAG (WV CAG) / The Transit Coalition
<b>Other (non-CAG Members)</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Mark Breyman	
Sri Koneru	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Vikrant Sanghai	Parsons Brinckerhoff
<b>SANBAG / Consultants</b>	
Garry Cohoe	Director of Project Delivery, SANBAG
Chad Costello	Project Manager, SANBAG
Jane Dreher	Public Information Officer, SANBAG
Stephanie Blanco	Parsons
David Speirs	Parsons
Donna Andrews	Lee Andrews Group, Inc., Outreach Consultants
Tito Corona	Lee Andrews Group, Inc., Outreach Consultants
Edgar Gutierrez	Lee Andrews Group, Inc., Outreach Consultants
Robbin Oshita	Lee Andrews Group, Inc., Outreach Consultants

## MEETING NOTES

During the first 30 minutes of the meeting, CAG Members were given time to meet and greet fellow Members as well as SANBAG's Project Delivery Team (PDT).

**Agenda** – Following the first 30 minutes of meet and greet, the meeting began with a round of introductions by CAG Members and presenters.

Next, the following items were covered through a PowerPoint presentation (a hard copy of the presentation was given to each of the CAG Members), which included the following discussion topics:

- **CAG Roles and Responsibilities, Protocols, Objectives** – CAG Members will have unique educational and input opportunities throughout the environmental document development process. As a result of this process, the project development team can move forward knowing that the project alternatives have been fully vetted with a broad cross-section of the community, and make a fully informed decision. CAG Members will be responsible for: maintaining active participation at the meetings (Members cannot miss consecutive meetings); commit to reaching out to pertinent stakeholder groups to provide objective updates based on information received at CAG meetings; and, provide status updates at each CAG meeting to cover the individual outreach efforts conducted as well as the feedback acquired from stakeholders.
- **CAG Meetings Schedule** – CAG Members were presented with a tentative CAG Meetings schedule which included dates for the first 4 set of CAG meetings. The intent of the tentative schedule shared with CAG Members was to emphasize the frequency of meetings anticipated for the first year, which is consistent with the goal to hold quarterly CAG meetings. The schedule is subject to change as the dates for the CAG meetings will be driven by the timeline for technical studies and other major project milestones. CAG Members will be informed as soon as there are any changes to the schedule.
- **Overview of I-10 Project** - The I-10 Corridor Project is studying the addition of lanes and other freeway improvements along all or a portion of the existing 35-mile stretch of I-10 from approximately 2 miles west of the Los Angeles/San Bernardino County line in the City of Pomona to Ford Street in the City of Redlands. This project is a major element of SANBAG's Measure I plan. The project will include studying one “no build” alternative and the following two “build” alternatives: Add One High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane in Each Direction and Add Two Express Lanes in Each Direction. Both build alternatives include the construction of additional lane(s) in each direction, median barriers, sound walls, retaining walls, drainage facilities; modification of bridges and freeway ramps. Under the “no build” alternative, additional I-10 travel lanes, as well as associated bridge and ramp improvements, would not be constructed.
- **Overview of I-15 Corridor Project** – The proposed I-15 Corridor Project would add lanes on the 33-mile stretch of I-15 from State Route 60 to US 395. The I-15 Corridor Project will consider one “no build” and one “build” alternative. Under the “no build” alternative, additional I-15 travel lanes, as well as associated bridge and ramp improvements, would not be constructed. The build alternative would provide Express Lanes in each direction of I-15. Beginning from State Route 60 one (1) Express Lane would be built in each direction up to Sixth Street and two (2) Express Lanes would be built in each direction from Sixth Street to US-395. Also, an auxiliary lane in each direction will be added between SR-60 and I-10. Express Lanes allow access to carpools and single occupant vehicles under certain conditions. The Strategic Plan and 10-Year Delivery Plan financial analysis concluded that traditional funds will not be available to construct additional lanes on the I-15 without an additional source of funding such as toll revenue. As such, HOV lanes are not being considered as an alternative for the I-15 corridor.
- **Introduction to Managed Lanes** – As we answer the questions about more lanes or better management of the existing lanes, we must consider some additional factors. First, traffic demand is increasing and will continue to grow; in fact, some studies predict the demand may increase by 30% in the next 30 years which warrants the need to accommodate the growth of the region. Secondly, we need to use the available right-of-way wisely as it is limited, both physically and fiscally; we only have right-of-way to construct two additional lanes in each direction. Thirdly, funding sources are declining; since 1998 State transportation funding decrease of 10% - vehicle miles travelled grown by 15%. Lastly, Measure I revenue is projected to be 25% less than projected when voters passed it in 2004, not taking into account inflation. As such, there is a strong need to optimize the existing resources – our region will not be able to build its way out of congestion. The goal of managed lanes is to optimize the vehicle throughput of the lanes and to provide reliable travel time for the motorists. The throughput of a freeway lane when it is operating at optimum is 1,800 to 2,000 vehicles per hour. When a lane is congested the throughput of a lane drops to 1,000 to 1,200 vehicles per hour.

- **High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes** – HOV lanes are managed by vehicle occupancy only. This approach has a number of benefits. For instance, HOV lanes reduce the number of vehicles on the road and increases corridor person throughput by promoting carpooling (minimum of 2 or 3 people). These lanes also improve air quality by reducing the number of vehicles and by improving traffic flow as this reduces the amount of emissions. HOV improvements would be paid for by existing transportation funding sources. However, these lanes also raise some concerns. The HOV alternative offers limited demand management as the only mechanism is occupancy requirement; as such, when the demand rises the HOV lanes become congested and throughput decreases, travel time increases, and trip reliability decreases. This issue is expected to occur on the proposed HOV lane on the I-10 corridor as they are projected to be congested within 10 years of opening. The only solutions for HOV lanes are the construction of additional HOV lanes (funding is not available) or the increase in occupancy requirement from 2+ to 3+ which results in underutilization of the HOV lanes – “Empty Lane Syndrome”.
- **Express Lanes** – Express Lanes manage traffic through vehicle occupancy requirements and pricing. Unlike the HOV Lanes where traffic demand will exceed the capacity of the lane over time resulting in congestion, Express Lanes will never become congested since the toll will be adjusted to ensure the demand will never exceed the capacity of the lanes. Express Lanes usually include an HOV component by offering a reduced toll to encourage carpooling which affords the same incentives as those mentioned for HOV - manages traffic demand, promotes carpooling, and improves air quality. Express Lanes also offer additional benefits not offered by HOV lanes: it generates revenue to pay for funding shortfalls for the I-10 and I-15 corridors, provides the general public with a reliable high speed travel option sustainable for the long term, and provides opportunity for Bus Rapid Transit to utilize the corridor. However, Express Lanes do raise a variety of concerns including the following: equity among users; freeways have already been paid for through taxes; conversion of an existing HOV lane to an Express lane; lack of benefits to motorists in the general purpose lane; congestion will be promoted to increase revenue. On-going studies being conducted as part of the environmental process – traffic, financial, and equity – will provide information to address these concerns.
- **Overview of the Environmental Process** – Caltrans and SANBAG are proceeding with an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) / Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the evaluation of the I-10 Corridor Project. The EIR/EIS requires a robust impact analysis of alternatives to environmental resources and has the highest level of public disclosure. This process also involves a number of steps before an alternative is chosen and the project is approved. SANBAG recently completed the public scoping period, which included two public scoping meetings and one resource agency scoping meeting to generate initial public input. The Draft EIR/EIS is expected to be released for public review by August 2015 and the Final EIR/EIS is anticipated to be completed by July 2017. The I-15 Corridor Project is currently in the planning stages; an environmental process is expected to start in the near future if the project is considered financially viable.
- **SANBAG’s Outreach Program for Corridor Projects** – SANBAG is executing a public outreach program to raise the level of awareness regarding the I-10 and I-15 corridor projects and obtain feedback from a wide spectrum of project stakeholders. The outreach program includes activities that focus on providing education about the similarities and differences between Express Lanes and HOV lanes through the effective implementation of conventional grassroots techniques (e.g., CAGs, public briefings, grassroots canvassing, and flier distribution) as well as electronic and social media techniques (e.g., project website, hotline, e-blasts, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube). These conventional and electronic outreach tools are intended to foster two-way communication and provide measureable results regarding the outreach and educational efforts. This outreach program will also include public outreach meetings and public hearings during the comment period for the Draft EIS/EIR.
- **Action Items**
  - *Assist with the identification of local community groups for briefings.* As part of the meeting materials, CAG Members were given a form titled “CAG Member’s List of Membership Organizations and other Affiliations.” CAG Members should utilize this form to identify all of their affiliate groups and indicate if briefing opportunities would be available for SANBAG to present on the I-10 and I-15 Corridor Projects.
  - *CAG Members will introduce their role as a CAG Member to each of their affiliated groups (a suggested script was provided to all CAG Members)*

- *CAG Members will provide input for the Grassroots Canvassing outreach efforts.* CAG Members are expected to provide input for the grassroots efforts that will kick-off by April 2013. CAG Members that provided input at the Kick-Off CAG meeting are still welcome to submit additional suggestions on areas that the outreach team should physically visit to reach communities that may not otherwise be reached via conventional and electronic outreach methods.
- *CAG Members will provide access to membership contact databases for affiliated groups, as needed.* CAG Members can either provide the contact database to SANBAG or they can commit to distributing information to their contacts, as needed.
- **Questions and Answers / General Team Discussion** – See below for an overview of the questions and comments that were raised during the HD CAG Kick-Off Meeting.

### **Questions and Comments raised by CAG Members:**

Q: Can we attend other CAG meetings?

*Response: Although CAG Members are expected to attend their assigned group meetings, Members with a scheduling conflict are able to RSVP for attendance at another meeting in lieu of the meeting for their assigned group. Meeting details for each of the CAGs will be included in future meeting notices to CAG Members.*

C: The maps displayed on the PowerPoint slides should include an overlay of Metrolink routes and other major transit systems.

Q: Will the Express Lanes be funded through a Public-Private Partnership?

*Response: A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is one delivery method that will be considered as the team develops the Project Financing Plan.*

Q: Have the toll rates for the Express Lanes been established?

*Response: The on-going Traffic and Revenue studies and financial analysis will determine the toll rates for a wide range of scenarios. From this information a recommended toll structure will be developed and presented to the SANBAG Board for consideration. The plan is to share this information with the CAGs to receive their input before the Board makes their final decision.*

Q: Would carpoolers have access at no-cost? Or will it be a subsidized cost for carpoolers?

*Response: The occupancy requirements and toll rates have not yet been established for the I-10 or I-15 Corridor Projects. As part of the Toll and Revenue studies and financial analysis different scenarios, including reduced toll for carpoolers, are being developed from which a recommended toll structure will be determined. This information will be shared with you at a future meeting.*

Q: Will the pricing be projected based on the traffic flow?

*Response: For tolled Express Lanes, demand will be managed using a combination of pricing, occupancy and other factors. A range of tolling policy assumptions will be considered within the ongoing T&R Study.*

Q: Would users be able to go in and out of the Express Lanes? Would these lanes include pay stations?

*Response: Ingress and egress points are anticipated approximately every 3 to 4 miles. The Express Lanes will not feature pay stations as toll payments will be assessed electronically.*

Q: Will the I-15 project proposed by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) include two Express Lanes?

*Response: Two (2) tolled Express Lanes will be built in both directions on I-15 from south of the SR-91 to SR-60.*

Q: Are two Express Lanes being considered for the I-10 because there are sufficient funds available?

*Response: Two Express Lanes are being considered in order to meet the anticipated demand in the I-10 corridor.*

Q: Will the number of lanes determine the amount or ratio of public and private funding?

*Response: The HOV alternative (adds one HOV lane in each direction) will be completely funded with public monies. The financial analysis currently being completed for the Express Lanes is considering two alternatives. One alternative has SANBAG as a public agency operating the Express Lanes with no private funding. The funding would be from traditional highway funds and the toll revenue. The other alternative is a Public Private Partnership, where a private company would operate the Express Lanes. The funding would be from private funding and SANBAG supplied traditional highway funds. The toll revenue alone will not be adequate to fund the improvements under either alternative.*

Q: What about the truck lanes on the I-15? Where do these two Express Lanes come in if we set aside two for truck lanes?

*Response: The eastern terminus of the truck lanes included in Southern California's (SCAG), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is at the I-10/I-15 junction. If the truck lanes are constructed in the future, that project will probably need to acquire right-of-way between the SR-60 and I-10. The Devore Interchange improvement project includes truck bypasses, similar to those on the I-5 Grapevine. SANBAG is leaving space in the middle of the Devore Interchange to accommodate Express Lanes on the I-15 corridor.*

Q: There are no funds for an I-15 HOV alternative? Are there plans for seeking additional funds to explore an HOV alternative?

*Response: The SANBAG Strategic Plan and 10-Year Delivery Plan financial analysis concluded that traditional funds will not be available to construct additional lanes on the I-15 without an additional source of funding such as toll revenue. As such, HOV lanes are not being considered as an alternative for the I-15 corridor.*

Q: Is the right-of-way along the I-15 corridor off-limits to developers? I have seen situations where development is granted to developers on right-of-ways that are in long term plans for transportation improvements.

*Response: The existing right-of-way is owned by the State of California and would not be available for private development.*

Q: How was the cut-off point at the US-395 for the proposed I-15 corridor determined?

*Response: It was based on the results presented by the 2009 Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study which determined that Express Lanes north of SR-395 were not warranted. The Traffic and Revenue consultant and the Financial consultant are taking a second look at the preliminary results to see if extension of the Express Lanes should be considered.*

Q: Are traffic flow projections being considered and incorporated into the studies?

*Response: Yes, these are being incorporated into the Traffic and Revenue Studies.*

Q: Are there physical and/or expense constraints along the I-15 corridor? Are there any issues related to the rail road routes?

*Response: The proposed I-15 alternative would generally fit within existing I-15 right of way. The primary physical constraints along the I-15 corridor include the mountainous topography within the Cajon pass and the system interchanges such as I-215/I-15 and US-395/I-15. In addition, there are two railroads traversing the Cajon pass and these facilities cross the I-15 at several locations. These constraints are being considered in the on-going preliminary engineering.*

C: The problem with the HOV alternative is that federal funding is not and will not be available in the coming years. This is going to require regions to look for incentives that will generate positive improvements on traffic congestion.

C: There's strong resistance by Californians to give up mobility freedom offered by their personal vehicles. Incentives will not function at the end of the day. The only factor that will change people's daily choices are hard economic impacts.

C: People's travel choices will change once the tipping point has been reached.

- C: An incentive that new employees may seek as part of the recruitment process is to have the Express lane expenses covered by the employer. This could result in talented employees requesting that this is written into their contracts.
- Q: Is the State responsible for HOV road maintenance?
- Response: Yes, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for HOV road maintenance.*
- Q: Who will monitor toll payment and HOV compliance on the Express Lanes?
- Response: Toll payments will be monitored electronically. The toll system will take pictures of license plates for vehicles in violation. The California Highway Patrol would continue to monitor HOV occupancy compliance.*
- C: Quality of life needs to be emphasized instead of management of people's behavior. There also needs to be a focus on how these lanes will offer opportunities to accommodate major transit routes and other travel options.
- Q: How do Express Lanes improve air quality?
- Response: Express Lanes improve air quality by encouraging carpooling and by improving traffic flow. Improved traffic flow reduces the amount of emissions, as idling vehicles produce significantly higher rates of emissions than vehicles moving at a consistent rate.*
- Q: What is Measure I? When was it approved?
- Response: Measure I is the half-cent sales tax collected throughout San Bernardino County for transportation improvements. San Bernardino County voters first approved the measure in November 1989 to ensure that needed transportation projects were implemented countywide through 2010. In 2004, San Bernardino County voters overwhelmingly approved the extension of the Measure I sales tax, with 80.03% voting to extend the measure through 2040.*
- Q: If sound walls are found to be required as part of the environmental study, would the cost to offset noise impacts affect the number of lanes that are ultimately built along the corridor?
- Response: The cost to build sound walls would not impact the number of lanes for either corridor.*
- Q: Is there sufficient right-of-way to construct the sound walls in addition to the number of proposed lanes?
- Response: Yes.*
- Q: Are native plants and fauna considered as part of the environmental process? If so, landscaping should be sensitive to plants and fauna, with special consideration on the watering impacts.
- Response: Yes, native plants and fauna are studied as part of the environmental review process, and proposed landscaping along the corridors will be developed with consideration of native species and water requirements.*
- Q: Will the results from the studies performed over the next couple of years still be valid by 2017 at the time SANBAG is expected to complete the final environmental review process as well as at the time of construction?
- Response: In some cases, studies such as the Traffic Volumes Report may need to be updated prior to 2017.*
- C: Local grade school children should be given flyers on the environmental and planning process for both projects. This is the best way to reach people that may not otherwise participate in the public outreach process.
- C: SANBAG should consider doing targeted outreach to college departments with fields that are related to the areas of study that are being conducted as part of the environmental review. This will create awareness while also generating opportunities for college students that are seeking ideas for school projects or reports.
- C: I'm interested in learning how transit will be integrated into the I-10 and I-15 corridor projects. Transit will enhance these projects as our region cannot build itself out of congestion. Keeping this in mind, VTrans just started doing vanpool programs.

- C: The region must consider Metrolink connectors to all major transportation systems. This project should not be performed in a vacuum. For this reason, the maps must include an overlay of current and planned major transit and transportation improvements (e.g. DesertXpress, Metrolink, High Speed Rail, etc.).
- C: Studies have indicated that Metrolink would take approximately 70 minutes of travel time from the High Desert area down to the Valley.
- C: Our region must keep in mind that these transportation improvements cannot be set aside as the construction costs will increase exponentially in the future. America Fast Forward is one of the programs that is taking that into consideration as it allows construction now, before the construction costs increase dramatically.
- C: Express Lanes would be a great option for all travelers going to Vegas. While this presents a very lucrative option, it will be very helpful to address any concerns regarding toll lanes before they're constructed.
- C: 5 of the 12 CAG Members in attendance currently have a FasTrak transponder for the SR-91 Express Lanes.

Q: Who monitors carpooling compliance on the SR-91?

*Response: As a part of an agreement with the state of California, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has a contract with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) for their enforcement services. The 91 Express Lanes are officially designated as part of the California State Highway system, therefore, traffic laws that apply to all other California state highways also apply to the 91 Express Lanes, including speed, carpool, and toll evasion violations.*

C: Transportation never makes money; it actually facilitates regional economic growth.

#### **Questions and Comments Included in Comment Forms Submitted by CAG Members:**

Q: What are the usage rates and revenues for existing Express Lanes that are comparable to the proposed corridor projects?

*Response: This topic will be discussed at the CAG Meeting #2. Usage rates and revenues generated by existing Express Lanes vary by corridor. In general, no two corridors will be the same.*

- C: As part of the canvassing efforts, the outreach team should visit businesses and commuter centers not just immediate/adjacent neighbors.
- C: SANBAG should speak with all major transportation providers, including: Amtrak, CAHSR, LAX/Ontario Airport, DesertXpress, etc.
- C: SANBAG should also speak with schools, colleges, universities, major developers, and potential private investors.
- C: SANBAG should further explain the need for the I-15 Corridor Project. Is this project being proposed to address truck traffic congestion, travel to employment from the High Desert down to the Valley, or to relieve congestion for Las Vegas traffic through the High Desert?
- C: It will be helpful to receive information on the anticipated Express Lanes service fees and toll rates for single drivers and HOV. This will be helpful to address concerns from people that reject toll lane projects.
- C: The following should be involved in the discussions for the I-10 and I-15 corridor projects: Barstow, Lucerne Valley, Oak Hills Property Owners Association, Hesperia Chamber of Commerce, Tri Community Services Council, March Senior Fair.
- C: Two CAG Members indicated a scheduling conflict with the tentative date for the next High Desert CAG meeting (April 10<sup>th</sup>).

#### **Collateral Material Distributed**

The following Project materials were provided to each attendee:

- Meeting Agenda
- Kick-Off Meeting PowerPoint slides
- I-10 Fact Sheet
- I-15 Fact Sheet
- What it Means to be a CAG Member
- Map: I-10 and I-15 CAGs
- CAG Member's List of Membership Organizations and other Affiliations
- Sample Narrative for CAG Members
- Grassroots Canvassing Comment Form
- Abbreviations and Acronyms

### **Next CAG Meeting**

- HD CAG Meeting #2 has been postponed to Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the same location – Victorville City Hall, Conference Room “D.” CAG Members will receive additional meeting details via email.
- CAG Members with scheduling conflicts are welcome to attend any of the other meetings as long as they provide advance notice of which other meeting they plan to attend in lieu of their assigned CAG meeting.