

Subject: High Desert Community Advisory Group (HD CAG) Meeting #10
I-10 and I-15 Corridor Projects, County of San Bernardino
Date: September 16, 2015 at 6 p.m.
Location: City of Victorville, Victorville, CA
Participants: Six CAG members were in attendance

HD CAG Meeting Attendees	Organization
Kevin Kane	Victor Valley Transit Authority
Holly Noel	Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
Thomas O’Connell	Attorney, Best Best & Krieger
Michele Spears	Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sophie Steeno	Citizens Advisory Group Member, City of Hesperia
Ann Vanino	Moving Forward Coaching and Consulting
HD CAG Members Not in Attendance	Organization
Muhammad A. Bari	US Army, Fort Irwin
Rick Danzey	Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce
Lionel Drew	Retired USAF
Dr. Dan Harris	Vice President, AARP
Thomas J. Kerman	Hesperia Unified School District
Raghada Khoury	Commercial Building
James Oravets	County of San Bernardino, Special Districts Department
Pelton Smalls	Self-employed
Bob R. Tinsley	BR Tinsley Inc. R.E. & Construction
Niru Vangala	Foremost Senior Campus
San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) and Consultants	
John Meier	Project Director of I-10 & I-15 Corridor Projects – SANBAG
Julie Vandermost Beeman	VCS Environmental/SANBAG Environmental
Carrie Gilbreth	Public Outreach – Westbound Communications
Eileen Hards	Public Outreach – Westbound Communications
Esmeralda Garcia	Public Outreach – MIG
Members of the Public	
Robert Katteria	
Bethany Nosko	Sophie Steeno Design

Ms. Carrie Gilbreth called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Gilbreth with Westbound Communications welcomed the High Desert CAG members and thanked them for their participation.

Ms. Gilbreth had each CAG member, public outreach team member, and member of the public introduce themselves.

Ms. Gilbreth gave a brief overview of the agenda.

II. Update and Recent Developments- John Meier

Project Updates – Mr. John Meier noted two major updates: (1) During the July Board of Directors meeting, the SANBAG Board of Directors directed SANBAG staff to move forward with an accelerated Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) process, which would enable SANBAG to potentially secure a major portion of the needed I-10 funding under the current Department of Transportation (DOT) administration. In support of this accelerated process, the Board of Directors awarded a contract to CDM Smith at the September Board of Directors meeting to develop Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue forecasts for the I-10 and I-15 corridors. (2) During the August meeting, the I-10 and I-15 Corridor Joint Sub-Committee agreed to bring a recommendation to confirm Express Lanes as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to the November Board of Directors meeting, prior to circulation of the Draft Environmental Document (DED). Confirming the LPA prior to the DED has two primary benefits:

- The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the federal transportation funding and authorization bill approved in 2012 highly recommends this approach in order to promote a more efficient and effective DED review, allowing the public to focus their evaluation on the LPA during the Public Comment Period.
- Confirming the LPA would support the accelerated TIFIA loan process, which would allow SANBAG to secure up to 33% of the funding for the I-10 corridor, and better positions SANBAG to take advantage of historically low interest rates.

Mr. Meier discussed Assembly Bill 914, which would give SANBAG the authority to operate toll facilities on the I-10 and I-15 corridors, as well as the statewide tolling bill AB 194, which would give Transportation Agencies across the state the ability to submit projects for tolling approval by the California Transportation Committee (CTC). Mr. Meier briefly described how the bill moved through the state assembly and senate, and are now advancing to the Governor's office. Approval of these bills will better enable SANBAG to pursue the accelerated Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan discussed earlier.

Questions and Comments – The following questions/comments were made by attendees during this part of the agenda:

- Ms. Michelle Spears asked what a TIFIA loan is and Mr. Meier responded that it was credit assistance from the federal government that provides funding, typically in the form of direct loans with favorable repayment terms for major transportation projects.

- Ms. Spears asked how both bills were linked. Mr. Meier responded by saying AB194 was there first and then the language from AB914 was referenced in AB914. They are both at the Governor's office.
- Ms. Spears asked what would happen if the legislation does not pass. Mr. Meier answered and said there is time in the schedule to go after it next year, but it wouldn't allow SANBAG to pursue TIFIA at the accelerated rate.
- Ms. Holly Noel asked about the timeframe of when the bill should pass. Mr. Meier said the Governor would have until October 11 to sign the bill.
- Mr. Thomas O'Connell wanted clarification the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was just for the I-10 and Mr. Meier confirmed it was just for the I-10 project. Ms. Beeman said they are putting together a community workshop for people to give initial feedback as the technical studies are kicked off for the I-15 project and they are looking at hosting that meeting the day after Veterans Day.
- Ms. Spears asked what the preferred alternative opinion is of CAG members that are closer to the I-10. Ms. Gilbreth stated that public outreach had continued with briefings and the next steps are building relationships and establishing the timing for support of the I-10 project.
- Ms. Beeman noted the key period is the public comment period where everyone is hoping to gain comment and support from the cities. Ms. Beeman reminded everyone that the locally preferred alternative is not a final decision.
- Ms. Spears asked when the final official vote for the I-10 preferred alternative by Caltrans would take place. Ms. Beeman said November of 2017. Mr. Meier anticipated the November 2015 SANBAG Board meeting to be the last discussion on the I-10 regarding Express Lanes as the locally preferred alternative. The SANBAG Board will be provided a report regarding feedback from the CAGs at the November meeting. The SANBAG Board can always reconsider, but there will be no further action required.

III. CAG Charge for November Milestone

Ms. Gilbreth announced a CAG report will be developed that will serve as a mechanism for providing the Board with a summary of the CAG efforts and recommended considerations about the alternatives prior to any action being taken. The document will be shared with CAG members ahead of time, and they will have a week to give feedback. Ms. Gilbreth also asked for volunteers to speak on behalf of the CAGs at the November SANBAG Board meeting.

Ms. Ann Vanino asked if they needed a consensus from the CAG members. Ms. Gilbreth said it is not about consensus. Ms. Gilbreth gave the example of giving considerations for SANBAG when deciding on a locally preferred alternative.

IV. Summary of Technical Studies/CAG Feedback and Questions

Ms. Julie Vandermost Beeman was introduced. Ms. Beeman has helped manage environmental studies and reports as a consultant to SANBAG for more than six years. Ms. Beeman oversees the environmental documents produced by Parsons.

Ms. Beeman provided a summary of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents being prepared for the project. She explained there were 16 technical studies prepared for the document.

Ms. Beeman presented a PowerPoint overview of the CEQA/NEPA technical studies. She stated that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the most detailed report you can prepare for CEQA and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is highest detailed document for NEPA. All documents disclose project impacts to the public and identify avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures to reduce impacts. The environmental documents analyze each of the three alternatives to the same level.

Ms. Beeman briefly reviewed the alternatives for the I-10 project: 1) No Build, 2) HOV, and 3) Express Lanes.

Ms. Beeman pointed out the extensive studies that were prepared and included in the document. She noted some studies are independent documents and others are summarized directly in the report.

Ms. Beeman explained that the preparation of the EIR/EIS requires Caltrans District 8 Quality Control review, Caltrans Headquarters/legal review, Caltrans District 8 final review, Caltrans District 8 preapproval review and Caltrans District 8 final review and approval to circulate.

Mr. Robert Katteria asked if Caltrans was the lead agency and Ms. Beeman confirmed yes. Mr. Meier said the environmental review process takes about nine months.

Ms. Beeman said once the draft is completed it goes to the public for review. The comment period is scheduled for December 3, 2015 through February 5, 2016. Forty-five days is the legal period, but it is being extended to 60 days because the document is being circulated during the holidays. In January 2016, there will be meetings where the public will be able to ask questions to the project development team, review documents, and provide formal comments to the environmental document. Members of the public will be able to review materials in a variety of ways that includes online, local libraries and at Caltrans and SANBAG offices. Comments received during the public review period will be captured in the final environmental document and will be addressed through written responses.

Mr. O'Connell asked where the community meetings would be held regarding the I-10 and Ms. Beeman answered they would be held near the I-10.

Ms. Beeman noted there are 142 avoidance minimization and/or mitigation measures identified in the document. The final environmental document will not be considered for final approval until 2017.

Ms. Beeman said the key differences between the build alternatives are primarily related to the eight miles between alternatives two and three (Los Angeles County Line to Haven Avenue), and

the addition of an extra lane for alternative three. All impacts from the project can be mitigated to below a level of significance except for air quality. Air in the region is already at a nonattainment level and that this project alone cannot fix this existing issue.

Questions and Comments- The following questions/comments were made by attendees during this part of the agenda:

- Ms. Sophie Steeno asked what are the largest issues of the project and if there are five or 10 key non-mitigated measures. Ms. Beeman answered no because they are called mitigation measures. There are 142 mitigation measures to reduce the level to below a level of significance. Ms. Steeno said that was an issue and was concerned because there is always an impact and the resolve is just to bring it to a tolerable level. Ms. Beeman gave a biological species example about pre-construction surveys and mitigation. She also noted that impacts could occur, but they are working to reduce impacts. Ms. Beeman said best way to review the technical studies is to read the technical summary at the front and the mitigations at the back.

Ms. Steeno also noted the public comment period was short considering the amount of information that needs to be considered. Ms. Beeman said one of the comments from Caltrans was to make the DEIR document less lengthy so the public could more easily read the document.

Ms. Spears asked why the I-15 project would not have an EIR/EIS. Ms. Beeman said there is a Mitigated Negative Declaration for that project.

V. CAG Input on I-10 Alternatives

Ms. Gilbreth passed out worksheets that members could use to take notes about the conversation on CAG input re: I-10 alternatives and considerations, and the CAG process as a whole. The notes taken will be incorporated into the CAG report that will be presented to the SANBAG Board in November. Ms. Esmeralda Garcia facilitated the conversation.

Ms. Garcia stated it is important that all considerations are raised for each of the I-10 alternatives. CAG members were asked to list the three top considerations. CAG members were also advised they could take worksheets home and think of other ideas.

Ms. Garcia said when making phone calls to CAG members, the concerns were equity, mobility and congestion relief for those trying to get to work. She asked everyone to comment respectfully.

Questions and Comments – The following questions/comments were made by attendees during this part of the agenda:

- Mr. Kevin Kane noted that the no-build option will increase congestion, which affects air quality and movement.
- Ms. Noel added that the impact of no toll lanes on economic growth in the community will be that it might not bring businesses if it is harder to get in and out of the High Desert.

- Ms. Steeno said that the High Desert freeway plan needs to be congruent with the Riverside freeway plans and the IE freeway plans. The High Desert needs to show they are being good neighbors by connecting to the current systems.
- Ms. Noel noted that the traffic corridor serving the I-10 for the truck traffic and transportation industry might have a serious impact on goods movement.
- Ms. Noel said we need to look at the impact on emergency vehicles and services and the concern with their mobility in the No Build alternative.
- Ms. Spears mentioned the No Build option might reduce the use of the Ontario International Airport. Mr. Meier said the same comment was made by FHWA and was a point in promoting Express Lanes.
- Ms. Steeno said in looking at HOV/Carpool versus Express Lanes, people still think HOV lanes would be better so people would not have to pay. Ms. Steeno asked about the general comments of the perception of people “down the hill.” Ms. Garcia responded by saying CAGs were staying neutral and a common theme in the CAGs was members were initially hesitant about Express Lanes and even though they still might not want to pay, they understand how it can provide a solution. Ms. Steeno said HOV Lanes became popular by AQMD and asked if HOV is a less efficient way of moving traffic. Mr. Meier said there was no additional funding for HOV Lanes on I-15. There would only be 25 miles of one lane in each direction on I-10. Express Lanes could get 232 total lane miles.
- Ms. Noel said one of the considerations on the HOV needs to be the number of lane miles achieved.
- Mr. O’Connell noted there would be no impact on the High Desert if an HOV Lane is added.
- Ms. Garcia gave another example of a CAG meeting comment regarding providing free or reduced tolls in Express Lanes.
- Ms. Steeno would like to recommend the I-10 offer credits to accounts when they use mass transit like trains and buses. On the East Coast, an express bus can be taken if someone can prove they are on the road for four days a week, and uses the road consistently. A question was asked if commuters get a discounted rate if they are a regular user. Ms. Steeno said HOV was free and useful and people that cannot afford to pay the fees should receive a discount. Mr. Kane mentioned those who pay for Express Lanes relieve congestion in the General Purpose Lanes. Ms. Steeno said that may not happen in reality. Mr. Meier said the benefit was to General Purpose Lane users and they will still have a better travel time and capacity is almost doubled by adding two lanes.
- Mr. O’Connell said the SR-91 would be worse without the toll lanes. Mr. Meier said the ride will be better there in 2017 when the RCTC 91 Express Lanes into Riverside County

will open. Mr. O'Connell reiterated that adding General Purpose Lanes would reduce congestion.

- Ms. Steeno brought up the point that if the bill is really high, then people will not want to drive the Express Lanes.
- Mr. Kapatteria said to relate HOV and Express Lanes to the value of time and how much time is saved and at what cost.
- Ms. Spears said her husband's business spends almost \$1,000 in tolls per month. She reiterated the value of time and how people decide if they should sit in traffic or continue to work. She said her co-worker is opposed because she believes that her taxes are already paying for the freeways.
- Mr. O'Connell said traffic is increasing. Ms. Spears agreed that and shared economic growth is also increasing.
- Mr. O'Connell said selling people about where they want to live will determine how long it takes them to get to work. He argued they would be stagnating growth in the high desert without the additional Express Lanes.
- Mr. Kane said space will run out eventually and noted you can't "pave your way out of congestion."
- Ms. Vanino said that equity was important. In looking at hard realities, there is no value for the low income person. She asked that SANBAG be transparent about all the issues and she thought summary was very readable. Ms. Vanino suggested that report is very honest about the realities. She stated, "the Express Lanes alternative provides a new travel option for low income and commuters" noting that there is no sensitivity in the document when talking about what low income people can really afford. Ms. Beeman responded that the summary was in response to an equity study. Ms. Vanino said it generates a stereotype that low income people are late for work and put their kids in daycare. Mr. Meier said the equity study report mentions that most people don't use it everyday and use it only when they are late or have to get somewhere noting that it provides an option that they aren't necessarily priced out of.
- Mr. Kane asked if there was anything on the larger study about saving time using mass transit. Mr. Meier said the equity study report recommended the exploration of connectivity with other transit options. He said they have coordinated with Omnitrans to figure out how they can interact with the Express Lanes facility. Mr. Kane said it could be as little as \$40 a week for commuting. Ms. Vanino liked that recommendation.
- Ms. Steeno asked if it was possible to have a longer payback period to help reduce fees since revenue will be constant. Mr. Meier asked if she was referring to the \$15 toll. Ms. Steeno noted she wanted there to be equity and not have to pay for everything. Mr. Meier said the toll revenue stays within SANBAG, as the SANBAG Board of Directors has determined not to pursue private funding. Mr. Meier added that the Cajon Pass pricing

is driven by the demand in the lanes. The price has to rise to to keep the Express Lanes from being congested, i.e. to keep the Express Lanes flowing at optimal levels during peak demand. In the Cajon Pass it cannot be pushed out because it is demand-based. Projections are based on significant growth in the High Desert. Service period of the loan is 35-40 years.

- Mr. O’Connell said he was from the East Coast and when they were in high traffic periods, the HOV Lanes were very empty and he asked if projections were the same here? He also mentioned that Express Lanes give more options than HOV. Mr. Meier said HOV Lanes are typically underutilized in the beginning, but as time goes by the lanes become overused and congested. As such, the ability to manage traffic for the long term with HOV Lanes is limited.
- Ms. Bethany Nosko said young professionals are moving back to area and it is cheaper to live in the High Desert, but they have to commute to work. She said young professionals are sometimes strapped financially and can’t afford to commute so they stay with roommates. Other CAG members suggested that if they are willing to be roommates, then wouldn’t they want to carpool? Mr. Meier noted that 3+ occupants in Express Lanes will ride for free.
- Ms. Noel mentioned the cost of housing in the High Desert vs. living “down the hill.” She said it might bring more people to live in the High Desert if it is easier to get to.
- Mr. O’Connell said in Virginia the Express Lanes reduced his commute by 20 minutes. Ms. Vanino said that was an effective equity argument. She suggested SANBAG promote behavior change.
- Ms. Noel said she was a rideshare coordinator and the problem with no privacy at home (families, etc.), the car ride to work is the only alone time people get – and that can be attractive. She said managing HOV Lanes is a problem because people do not want to spend time with one another. Ms. Garcia mentioned new housing developments are being designed with multi generational families in mind.
- Mr. O’Connell pointed out the Express Lanes are like HOV Lanes plus one person. Mr. Meier said HOV is a component of Express Lanes. HOV now is assuming a 2+ occupancy, but noted that most 2+ HOV Lanes in greater California are congested during peak periods.
- Ms. Noel mentioned the traffic congestion is an air quality issue as it gets closer to Los Angeles.
- Mr. Kane asked if people with transponders can pay less than the cash payers. Mr. Meier clarified that the SANBAG Express Lanes would not have a cash option, but rather a License Plate Recognition (LPR) option, where a camera captures the vehicle license plate and sends a bill to the registered owner. However, the transponder rate would be significantly less than the LPR rate, and a transponder would be required to get the HOV 3+ free travel.

- Ms. Spears asked about FasTrak and whether there are commercial accounts. Ms. Steeno said commercial vehicles can't travel in Express Lanes and asked if there are residential or employer rates. Ms. Spears suggested giving businesses discounts for their employees. The SR-91 is starting a frequent user program according to Mr. Meier. The low income equity program is included in recommendations and low income is noted as falling under double the U.S. poverty level.
- Ms. Vanino asked if the low income options were realistic and recommended the promotion for behavior change. She asked that the team communicate the way to use Express Lanes for free. Ms. Beeman said they thought the \$25 one-time fee was difficult. Mr. Meier said it was to eliminate having the transponder in their car to use in an emergency.
- Ms. Noel said to be cautious about being patronizing when communicating to lower income demographics. Be careful not to say "trust us" because it sounds government-oriented.
- Ms. Steeno asked where the revenue goes and if those monies could be used to maintain General Purpose Lanes. Mr. Meier said that per the latest tolling bill language, an expenditure plan would be developed in consultation with Caltrans on the toll revenue policy approved by the SANBAG Board of Directors requires revenues to first cover Express Lanes operations and maintenance as well as debt service. It would then be used to pay back Measure I contributions, followed by building out the Express Lanes system and then to make improvements within the corridor including transit. Ms. Noel said there was probably a legal issue if the money people are contributing to Express Lanes is used to maintain or improve General Purpose Lanes. Ms. Beeman said the priority is to keep the money along the corridor and the second priority is that you don't want Caltrans to un-earmark the money they have for the maintenance.

Ms. Garcia shifted the conversation to discuss suggested improvements from the CAG regarding the CAG process.

Questions and Comments- The following questions/comments were made by attendees during the CAG process:

- Ms. Steeno mentioned that all CAG members should be more involved.
- Ms. Spears mentioned that the CAG notices need to stand out more and they should have more notification time before each meeting.
- Mr. Kane said the meetings should continue to grow with new members.
- Ms. Gilbreth addressed the reason for the timing issue is related to the change to the SANBAG Board meeting being in November and the Sub-Committee action in October. Ms. Gilbreth mentioned sending out calendar invites through Outlook and the CAG agreed that would be good. They would like to see more advanced notice, specifically a

four-week notice versus a two-week notice. The team agreed to try and give a six-week notice.

- Ms. Noel shared the concern of growing the CAG and the possibility in the meetings running long unless there is a separate “catch up meeting” and feels like it is disrespectful of time for the current CAG members. Ms. Spears agreed.
- Ms. Spears asked for a “heads up” about the month the meeting will take place, even if there is not a dedicated date. Ms. Steeno mentioned that all CAG members can consider going to another CAG meeting.
- Ms. Gilbreth noted the communication between this CAG meeting and the next will be heavy due to the public comment period. She asked that CAG members reach out to the public for weigh-in and promotion of the public hearings. Mr. Kane suggested to pick a date in January for the next CAG meeting and then suggested on moving the date if necessary.
- Ms. Gilbreth said SANBAG needs to identify more briefings to groups and would like help booking presentations. The team will begin to draft pieces for newsletters and other publications. Ms. Steeno suggested a presence at the annual premier business show on October 15.
- Ms. Spears and Ms. Noel added the team needs to be realistic about the terms CAG members serve. Initially they were being told one to two years and it has been longer. The team needs to make sure people are really dedicated instead of just using CAG membership for community status.

V. Meeting Summary and Next Steps

Ms. Gilbreth thanked all CAG members for their comments and said they would have a week to turn around comments. Comments would be included in the CAG report to the Board in November. Ms. Gilbreth again invited CAG members to provide comments and speak at the Board meeting. The date of the meeting is November 4, 2015. Ms. Gilbreth also noted the members can call to have collateral materials mailed. She then reminded the members that it is important to gain comments during the public comment period.

- Ms. Spears asked how many meetings would be scheduled for next year. Ms. Gilbreth said 3-4 meetings and that they will have a plan in February.

Carrie adjourned meeting at 8:06 p.m.

CAG

SEPTEMBER 16 2015

NO BUILD

- ? WHAT ARE GREATEST IMPACTS?
NON-MITIGATED MEASURES
- ? WHAT ARE MND AND EA
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
- DO NOT REQUIRE 5 STEP PROCESS
- PROPOSED FOR I-15
- ? CAN PAY BACK PERIOD BE EXTENDED

HOV
2+

EXPRESS
3+

<u>MOBILITY</u>	<u>ECONOMY</u>	<u>EQUITY</u>	<u>COMMUNICATION</u>
<p>DOES NOT ADDRESS CURRENT & FUTURE ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CONGESTION - ECONOMIC DEPT - AQ <p>REGIONAL NETWORK LA, RIVERSIDE</p> <p>GOODS MOVEMENT EMERGENCY SERVICES</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>CARPPOOLING - DOES NOT ENCOURAGE QUIET TIME</p> <p>EMPLOYER TRANSPONDERS COORDINATE W/ EXPRESS BUS VANPOOL SAVED TIME USING TRANSIT</p>	<p>CAG IMPROVEMENT/PROCESS</p> <p>CAG MEETING SCHEDULE IN ADVANCE 4-6 WEEKS</p> <p>GROW COMMITTEE - INVITE OTHERS COMMUNICATE TIME COMMITMENT</p> <p>MEETING INVITE - OUTLOOK/GOOGLE</p> <p>ORIENTATION/BRIEFINGS FOR NEW MEMBERS</p> <p>MEETING "HEADS UP"</p> <p>WAVE FEES FOR LOW INCOME BENEFITS</p> <p>COMMUNICATE VALUE - TIME SAVED</p> <p>TRANSPARENCY, CLARITY</p> <p>NONTECHNICAL "SAY IT LIKE IT IS"</p> <p>QUALITY OF LIFE</p>	<p>BRIEFINGS</p>
<p>LIMITED UTILITY</p> <p>LIMITATION OF MILES DOES NOT ACHIEVE GOALS AS WELL AS EX</p>	<p>- MEETS GROWTH NEEDS</p> <p>INCENTIVES DISCOUNTS FOR MULTIMODAL OPTIONS</p> <p>NOT AFFORDABLE TO YOUNG ADULT</p> <p>- RESIDENT RATE</p>	<p>OPTIONS IN SENSITIVE MANNER</p> <p>- YOUNG ADULT JOBS HOUSING TRADE OFFS</p>	