



December 30, 2003

Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA
90012-2952

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: JAMES DE LA LOZA
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COUNTYWIDE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: COMPLETION OF CENTRAL CITY ARTERIAL HOV
FEASIBILITY STUDY

ISSUE

This is to inform the MTA Board that staff has completed the attached Central City Arterial High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Study. At its May 18, 2000 meeting, the Board of Directors approved the Harbor Freeway Transitway Project Study Report (PSR) and directed MTA staff to work with the City of Los Angeles to implement the PSR's Transportation System Management alternative. Additionally, it directed staff to evaluate the feasibility of using the Alameda Street Corridor, identified in the PSR, for enhanced HOV access through downtown Los Angeles. The study's name was changed to the "Central City Arterial HOV Feasibility Study" because it evaluates the feasibility of implementing an arterial HOV facility on numerous downtown streets in addition to Alameda Street. Copies of the Study are available by contacting Art Cueto, Project Manager, Central Area Planning Team at (213) 922-3052, or cuetoa@mta.net.

BACKGROUND

The Central City Arterial HOV Feasibility Study was prepared to assess the ability to improve HOV access and mobility along Alameda Street and nearby downtown arterials.

Methodology

The Feasibility Study identified a total of 30 street segments (15 north-south and 15 east-west) on which arterial HOV lanes could potentially be developed within downtown Los Angeles. The study also considered extending the Harbor Transitway and the El Monte Busway from their current termini to points closer to downtown, and the construction of an elevated transitway along the Exposition right-of-way and the Los Angeles River.

A baseline report compiled existing transportation information, data of existing and future needs and conditions, a review of programmed and planned projects, and a review of existing traffic movement deficiencies within the study area. This data was used to develop an initial range of potentially feasible alternatives, and develop appropriate performance measures used to analyze each alternative's effectiveness.

Additionally, an extensive public outreach process consisting of a public workshop, and meetings with downtown stakeholder groups and elected officials was conducted. These meetings identified minimal support for the initial alternatives given the growth of downtown housing and commercial activities.

The baseline report found that an arterial HOV system would be difficult to implement within specific parts of downtown, specifically Central City West, South Park, and areas east of Alameda Street due to heavy vehicular, bus, and pedestrian cross traffic, frequency of stops, limited roadway widths, lack of available right-of-way, and the increased speeds associated with such a system, and limited north-south street access. The report did find that a direct HOV connection into downtown from the end of the two existing HOV facilities could be very beneficial allowing for improved travel time based on travel demand estimates.

Analysis conducted in the baseline report along with public input, produced the final range of alternatives listed below:

- Alternative 1 - Extending the Harbor Transitway and the El Monte Busway from their existing termini to points closer to downtown.
- Alternative 2 - Implementing arterial HOV lanes on Main and Spring Streets.
- Alternative 3- Providing a direct connection between the two existing HOV facilities with a grade-separated structure that would run along the Exposition railroad right-of-way and along the Los Angeles River's west bank.

The Feasibility Study included the provision of a direct connection between the two existing HOV facilities by using the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) and the Santa Ana Freeway (US-101) as a basis for comparison of the arterial HOV alternatives. A detail feasibility analysis was not performed for this alternative.

Findings

Performance measures consisting of physical feasibility, project cost, traffic operations, transit analysis, and environmental impacts were used to evaluate each of the three alternatives listed above. The findings include:

- Alternatives 1 and 2 are both physically and operationally feasible. Estimated costs range from between \$10 million to \$60 million. Downtown stakeholders support Alternative 1 over Alternative 2.

- Alternative 2 demonstrates the greatest potential for implementing arterial HOV lanes within downtown of the thirty street segments analyzed and would not generate any significant environmental impacts.
- Both Alternatives 1 and 2 would only marginally improve transit system operations.
- Alternative 3 would not generate enough benefit to justify its \$380 million estimated cost.

Recommendations

The Feasibility Study concluded that neither Alternatives 1 nor 2 would generate sufficient benefits within the next five years to justify their costs given current traffic flow conditions. Alternative 1 could be beneficial in the event that traffic conditions significantly deteriorate between five to ten years into the future. This study considered Alternative 3 to be infeasible and therefore not recommended for further consideration.

NEXT STEPS

MTA staff will continue working with the City of Los Angeles to monitor traffic conditions within downtown Los Angeles and consider improvements as appropriate.

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