MEMO

Date: February 3, 2005

To: Transportation and Communications Committee

From: Alan Bowser, Senior Regional Transportation Planner
(213-236-1843) or Bowser@scag.ca.gov

RE: I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS) Letter of Completion

RECOMMENDATION: Information Item.

SUMMARY

The Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS) Peer Review Group heard final presentations on December 16, 2004 for the I-710 (Ocean Boulevard in the City of Long Beach to SR-60) Major Corridor Study (RSTIS). The Peer Review Group Members agreed that the study presented was complete (see Attachment A) and met the regional (2004 RTP) and federal requirements as outlined in TEA-21, and could thus be provided a Letter of Completion. The 12/16/04 RSTIS Meeting Minutes Summary is available upon request.

The Letter of Completion documents the Peer Review Group's agreement regarding the successful completion of the RSTIS process. This item confirms that SCAG will provide, under signature of the Director of Planning and Policy Department, a Letter of Completion according to adopted SCAG guidelines for the RSTIS Process.

BACKGROUND

Once the provision of the Letter of Completion has been agreed upon, the RSTIS (formerly MIS) Process is complete and draft/final environmental analysis can be initiated/completed, if required for the Locally Preferred Strategy and/or selected alternatives. If the locally preferred long-term strategy is different from the currently adopted 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (applicable in this case) it can be presented to the Regional Council for consideration as an amendment to the adopted Plan.

attachment

ELECTRONIC COPY

February 3, 2005

Mr. Roger Snoble, Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
1 Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California 90012-2952

Attention: James L. de la Loza

Subject: Letter of Completion for the I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS)

Dear Mr. Snoble:

On November 29, 1993, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued final guidance on new regulations stemming from ISTEA passage. The Major Investment Study (MIS) is one of these ISTEA requirements.

Subsequently, TEA-21 removed the requirement for a "stand-alone" MIS, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued proposed new MIS regulations and guidance, expected to be finalized in 2001, and FHWA has advised observing existing MIS guidance until DOT guidelines are finalized.

SCAG's adopted 2004 RTP requires a transportation alternatives analysis study for all regionally significant transportation investments (RSTIS) that might utilize federal funds. Projects in this category are usually capacity adding transit and/or highway improvements.

In addition to an alternatives analysis, RSTIS components also include (1) public involvement and (2) consultation among the MPO, county transportation commissions, transit operators, Caltrans, FHWA, FTA, State Resource Agencies and other investment stakeholders.

The range of alternatives considered in the I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS) is sufficient to meet RSTIS Guidelines as adopted by SCAG's Transportation and Communications Committee. LACMTA conducted an exemplary public and agency outreach process that provided adequate opportunities for public involvement. Moreover, numerous community-level and corridor-wide meetings including the RSTIS Peer Review Group facilitated public agency involvement and consultation during the study process.

On December 16, 2004 the ***RSTIS Peer Review Group*** met and determined that the I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS) meets SCAG and FTA/FHWA requirements, and that the project is ready to advance from planning to the environmental impact and project development phase as necessary.

Attachment A [1] is a part of this LOC. It documents the Locally Preferred Strategy and describes next steps agreed to by the study's Technical Advisory Committee, the Oversight Policy Committee and the study's funding partners (LACMTA, Caltrans, GCCOG and SCAG) to advance the project to the Environmental Phase.

This correspondence documents the RSTIS Peer Review Group findings that the I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS) meets Metropolitan Planning Rules and is therefore granted this ***Letter of Completion***. If you have any questions please contact me at (213) 236-1889 or Al Bowser at (213) 236-1843.

Sincerely,

Hasan Ikhrata
Director of Planning and Policy

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[1] **Attachment A - I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS) - Locally Preferred Strategy**

cc: Ernest Morales, Project Manager, LACMTA
Richard Powers, Executive Director, Gateway Cities COG
Sharas Bangalore, Caltrans District 7
Sandra Balmir, FTA/FHWA Los Angeles Metro Office
Robert Cady, FHWA
Alan Bowser/RSTIS File, SCAG

I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS) - Locally Preferred Strategy
(Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach to SR-60)

Attachment A documents the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) and describes next steps agreed to by the study's Technical Advisory Committee, the Oversight Policy Committee and the study's funding partners (LACMTA, Caltrans, GCCOG and SCAG) to advance the project to the Environmental Phase.

The OPC met on November 18, 2004 and adopted the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) for the I-710 Major Corridor Study (RSTIS). The OPC approved the draft hybrid design concept and the related supporting elements as the LPS:

- Hybrid Design Concept, which consists of ten (10) mixed flow lanes, specified interchange improvements, and four (4) truck lanes between the inter-modal rail-yards in Vernon/Commerce and Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach

- Alternative B – Transportation System Management/Transprtation Demand Management Improvements

- Improvement to arterial highways within the I-710 Corridor

- Construction of truck inspection facilities to be integrated with the selected overall design concept

The OPC, as part of the LPS decision, also committed to an additional "mini" study of the segment of the Corridor between Atlantic/Bandini and SR-60 to determine an acceptable design concept and scope for that segment of the Corridor. In addition, OPC adopted four recommendations providing direction and guidance on the future phases of project development and on companion actions:

1. Request the Gateway Cities Council of Governments to return with suggested steps for initiating the development and implementation of a corridor-level air quality action plan to include not only technical but also funding, institutional structure and legislative strategies as well as an approach to holding public agencies with jurisdictions in the Corridor accountable for progress in meeting air quality and public health objectives in the Corridor and Region.

2. Forward the Tier 2 Report in its entirety to be accepted as pre-scoping guidance to the preparation of the EIR/EIS.

3. Request the Gateway Cities Council of Governments to identify and pursue appropriate avenues to implement those Tier 2 recommendations that prove to exceed the scope of any I-710 transportation improvement project and report back to the community.

4. Request LACMTA and GCCOG staff to suggest a process and structure for continuing community participation throughout the environmental analysis.

Also, several local representatives, the community advisory group members, and the public raised a number of critical concerns and issues as documented by the OPC on November 18, 2004 that will become part of future discussions as the various aspects of the project move into the next phases.