



## The I-5 Consortium Cities Joint Powers Authority

*For the preservation of communities while enhancing freeway capacity*

January 25, 2021

Mr. Phillip A. Washington, CEO Metro  
One Gateway Plaza  
Mail Stop 99-19-6  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Member Cities:

Commerce  
Downey  
La Mirada  
Norwalk  
Santa Fe Springs

Re: Letter of Support regarding Metro Board Motion 2020-0733 (I-605 Corridor Improvement Project Build Alternatives)

Dear Mr. Washington,

The I-5 JPA would like to express our appreciation to the Metro Board, and to provide support regarding Metro Board Motion 2020-0733 (I-605 Corridor Improvement Project Build Alternatives). We believe that this is a thoughtful response to the impactful alternative that Metro staff were proposing to release as part of the I-605 DEIR/DEIS. We have reviewed the motion and would like to provide a few comments and recommendations.

First, the I-5 JPA fully agrees that the Metro Motion may allow for consensus regarding an additional alternative. We recommend that any additional alternative be called a "locally collaborated alternative", replacing "locally supported alternative" as noted in item A of the Recommendation in the Metro Motion. This nuance allows for us to have a collaborative effort, resulting in an additional alternative, while not guaranteeing that any alternative will have public support, even though that is the intent.

Second, regarding Metro's recommendation for a holistic, equity based examination of the project regarding induced demand and greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals; we feel that this is an academic debate and that this approach needs to be managed from a macro level (all types of Metro projects) rather than a micro (Highway) level meaning there needs to be a balance in the subregion, rather than singling out the highway program, when highway capacity projects inherently attract latent demand. Every effort is made to mitigate the various impacts resulting from highway infrastructure projects, however:

- Highway projects are always going to alter traffic patterns, and while a highway expansion project does induce an acute demand, it can be argued that the overall volumes traveling in the subregion remain the same. We are not in a rural area, therefore there is little opportunity to induce demand on I-5, via more housing (for example). From a land use perspective, any additional population increase, or densification, in the area will further congest the highway system, unless other transportation alternatives are available and convenient.
- The freeway expansion removes and reduces the vehicles using the local city streets and arterials.
- The freeway project provides additional safety and operational benefits on the existing highway system.
- The shift in volumes from the local streets to the freeway itself, improves the air quality and quality of life within the actual cities and communities, which is why the I-5 JPA was formed, consistent with our mission. Hence, the JPA and our member Cities are

- supportive of a freeway widening project, assuming the impacts are balanced with benefits, making it worth the investment.
- It should be noted that that planting trees, as a mitigation of the EIR, is able to reduce the overall carbon footprint yielded by any additional pavement area added on a freeway system. This is why the I-5 JPA, funded by Caltrans, is planting over 10,000 trees, to mitigate GHG and the carbon footprint from the recent I-5 widening that is either completed or nearly complete south of I-605.

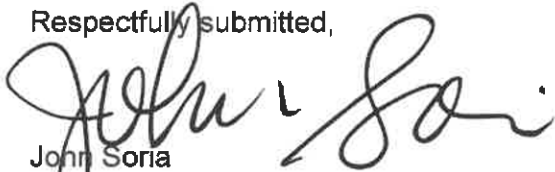
In summary:

- The area is built out, there is minimal opportunity and potential to induce actual demand (meaning more people move to the area, or leave their existing transportation mode, and switch to a vehicle, on the overall transportation system), rather the existing traffic patterns are adjusted, and more vehicles are using the freeway, and proportionally less vehicles are impacting our City streets.
- Furthermore, Metro is doing everything possible to encourage the use of light rail, bus transit, and active transportation, which provides the holistic equity-based investment in the subregion region.

While we have yet to hear back from Metro staff regarding an initial meeting to begin the collaboration process, and with the holidays coming, we are optimistic that staff will be able to meet and be able to provide positive feedback to you by the January 2021, resulting in a final report on a path forward in April 2020.

We want to thank you again for this very positive development. We look forward to working with Caltrans and your staff regarding the development of a locally collaborated alternative.

Respectfully submitted,



John Soria  
City of Commerce Council Member and  
Chairman of the I-5 Consortium Cities Joint Powers Authority

Cc: Metro Board Members  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
AE Chair Jeff Boynton  
TAC Chair Noe Negrete  
Theresa Devoy, JPA Administration