

Newport Beach City Council Study Session Comments

On September 23, 2008, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and consultant team lead by LSA Associates, presented the SR-55 Access Study findings to the City of Newport Beach at their study session. This is the same presentation made at the Costa Mesa City Council study session of September 9, 2008. Following are some of the main comments made by Newport Beach City Council on the SR-55 Access Study:

Webb: The construction of 19th Street bridge over Santa Ana River can reduce traffic on Newport Boulevard and will also result in fewer vehicles on Coast Highway. It will probably eliminate need for both (Newport Boulevard and Coast Highway) widenings. Existing freeway plan has on-/off-ramps at 17th Street. Cut/Cover alternative does not have ramps and so there will be greater congestion at the terminus.

Gardner: Can the Terminal Enhancement alternative be designed better? She sympathizes with Costa Mesa (high Downtown traffic). However, is there any alternative that can be designed without moving the problem further down?

Henn: Concerned with moving the problem to Newport Beach. Is there a funding plan for handling any impacts at Newport Beach intersections?

Diagle: What kind of timeframe to implement these improvements?

Selich: Why does the current freeway plan cost (\$500 M) so much more than cut/cover (about \$200 M)? What is the reason Costa Mesa opposes current freeway plan? Are the effects on Newport Beach same for current freeway plan & Cut/Cover plan (OCTA/LSA said yes and Don Webb disagreed)? How are the impacts handled during construction?

OCTA and consultant addressed the comments. Several of the comments will be addressed in the follow-up phase of the study. Regarding moving the problem to the south, it was noted that the traffic volumes are significantly less at Industrial Way compared to 19th Street.