



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2011

ITEM NUMBER: VII. 2

SUBJECT: SR-55 ACCESS STUDY UPDATE

DATE: SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RAJA SETHURAMAN, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
MANAGER, 714-754-5032

DESCRIPTION

In October 2008, OCTA and the City of Costa Mesa completed the SR-55 Access Study that recommended four alternatives for further consideration in the next phase of the study. This phase is called Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS), and it further analyzes the alternatives as well as develops cost estimates and a schedule for future activities. OCTA is the lead in the PSR/PDS stage with support from Caltrans, Costa Mesa, and other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file report on the SR-55 Access Study.

ERNESTO MUNOZ

Interim Director, Department of Public Services

RAJA SETHURAMAN

Transportation Services Manager

BACKGROUND

The Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) currently terminates at 19th Street and continues south through Downtown Costa Mesa as Newport Boulevard. This major arterial, under the jurisdiction of the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), carries over 100,000 vehicles per day at the SR-55 Freeway terminus at 19th Street. The result is severe congestion at several intersections within the downtown area, and the conditions are exacerbated during summer months due to beach traffic. Other related impacts include pedestrian accessibility issues, business access, and cut-through traffic within the adjacent east side residential streets.

The Caltrans Route Concept Report currently designates the SR-55 Freeway to extend south to Industrial Way in an easterly alignment with significant impacts to homes and businesses in Costa Mesa. In order to determine other alternatives to the extension of the SR-55 Freeway, OCTA, in cooperation with the City of Costa Mesa and participation by Caltrans and other agencies, initiated the SR-55 Access Study in May 2007. Based on the findings by the consultant team, and input from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), and the public, seven project alternatives were developed. These alternatives are described and depicted in Attachment 1.

At the October 7, 2008, regular City Council meeting, all alternatives in Attachment 1 were considered, and the following four alternatives were recommended for further study:

- Alternative 1 – No Build/Baseline
- Alternative 3 – Transportation System Management
- Alternative 5 – Vertical Terminal Enhancement
- Alternative 7 – Cut and Cover Under Newport Boulevard

OCTA Board of Directors also approved a similar recommendation on October 27, 2008. Attachment 2 includes the SR-55 Access Study Executive Summary.

In July 2009, the Cities of Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, and Huntington Beach, sent a joint letter to OCTA requesting that the next phase of the study be initiated under the leadership of OCTA using the cooperative study process involving all parties. OCTA concurred with the Cities' request and, in conjunction with the City of Costa Mesa and Caltrans, staff developed a scope of work for the next phase of the study.

On March 16, 2010, the Costa Mesa City Council approved a Cooperative Agreement with OCTA for funding and project management responsibilities. In addition, the City Council also approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that included OCTA, Caltrans, and the Cities of Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, and Newport Beach, identifying more specific agency roles and responsibilities for completing the study.

Funding for this phase of the SR-55 Access Study is primarily from the federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) in the amount of \$1,000,000 and OCTA's Growth Management Area (GMA) grant of \$125,000.

ANALYSIS

The next phase of the SR-55 Access Study currently underway is the preparation of a Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS). A consultant team led by TRC Companies, Inc., was selected to prepare the PSR/PDS document. This document will be used to further analyze and refine the project alternatives, and estimate project scope, schedule, and costs. While the PSR/PDS will be managed by OCTA, the extensive public outreach and business impact analysis is being led by the City of Costa Mesa.

Since the initiation of the project, the study team has been focused on two critical activities. The first is the initial planning and data collection activities required for completion of the PSR/PDS document to meet Caltrans' requirements. The other activity is to develop a comprehensive public involvement program, identifying key stakeholders and business representatives, as well as initiating data collection efforts through a comprehensive business survey.

The initial phase of the public involvement program began this summer and extends through early fall. The primary goals of the initial phase are to re-introduce the project to the public and gather early feedback from stakeholder working groups. Major components of this phase of the public involvement program effort include the following:

- An initial business survey with key businesses in the area. The goal of this survey is to gather information with respect to current business operations, transportation needs, and obtain an understanding of potential construction impacts to their operations.
- A Stakeholder Working Group meeting with business and resident representatives to introduce the project and gather input on potential issues early in the project development process.
- A Public Open House to re-introduce the project and inform the public of various ways to stay involved with the project and obtain information.
- A Business Working Group meeting to further discuss business-related concerns from a larger audience of businesses. This meeting will discuss the results from the business survey and gather additional information.

Subsequent phases of the public involvement process will involve the above groups and will solicit input and comments as project alternatives become more refined. At the initiation of each subsequent phase of the public involvement process, staff will update the City Council of the project and present findings, as well as preview upcoming activities.

The funding for PSR/PDS is primarily from the federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) grant and OCTA's Growth Management Area (GMA) program. A total of \$1,000,000 was derived from the RSTP grant and \$125,000 was allocated from GMA funds. Approximately \$25,000 of the City's share will be allocated from funds budgeted for the SR-55 Downgrade Study.

This PSR/PDS phase of the SR-55 Access Study is anticipated to be completed in mid 2013.

ALTERNATIVES

This report is to provide an update on the PSR/PDS phase of the SR-55 Access Study initiated approximately six months ago. There are no alternatives with this item.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

There is no environmental action with this report. The study includes a preliminary evaluation of environmental impacts. Following this study, a more detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared.

CONCLUSION

In October 2008, OCTA and the City of Costa Mesa completed the SR-55 Access Study that recommended four alternatives for further consideration in the next phase of the study. This phase is called Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS), and it further analyzes the alternatives as well as develops cost estimates and a schedule for future activities. OCTA is the lead in the PSR/PDS stage with support from Caltrans, Costa Mesa, and other agencies.

A consultant team lead by TRC was selected for the SR-55 PSR/PDS phase. The public involvement program is underway and the study team, along with input from all agencies, identified key stakeholders and business representatives, as well as initiated data collection efforts through a comprehensive business survey. Staff will provide periodic updates to City Council at the conclusion of various milestones during this major study on the SR-55 and Downtown Costa Mesa.

Attachments: 1 - SR-55 Access Study - Alternatives 1 through 7
 2 - SR-55 Access Study – Executive Summary

Distribution: Chief Executive Officer
 Interim Assistant Chief Executive Officer
 City Attorney
 City Clerk
 Interim Development Services Director

No Build / Baseline



NO BUILD / BASELINE ALTERNATIVE



- LEGEND**
- EXISTING ST-DRAW-CROSSING BLVD
 - CITY STREET INTERSECTIONS
 - CITY LIMITS
 - EXISTING OCTA BUS ROUTES
 - PROPOSED BUS ROUTES

CONSTRUCTION:

- 1 ADJUST ST-DRAW-CROSSING BLVD IN EXISTING CONFIGURATION
- 2 ADJUST ST-DRAW-CROSSING BLVD FROM 17TH ST TO 10TH ST.
- 3 ADJUST ST-DRAW-CROSSING BLVD FROM DEWEYWAY TO 17TH ST.
- 4 ADJUST ST-DRAW-CROSSING BLVD FROM 17TH TO DEWEYWAY.

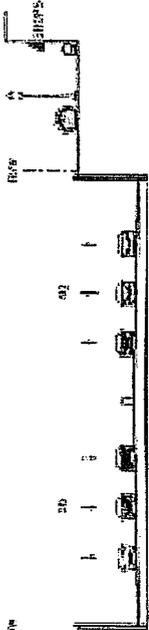
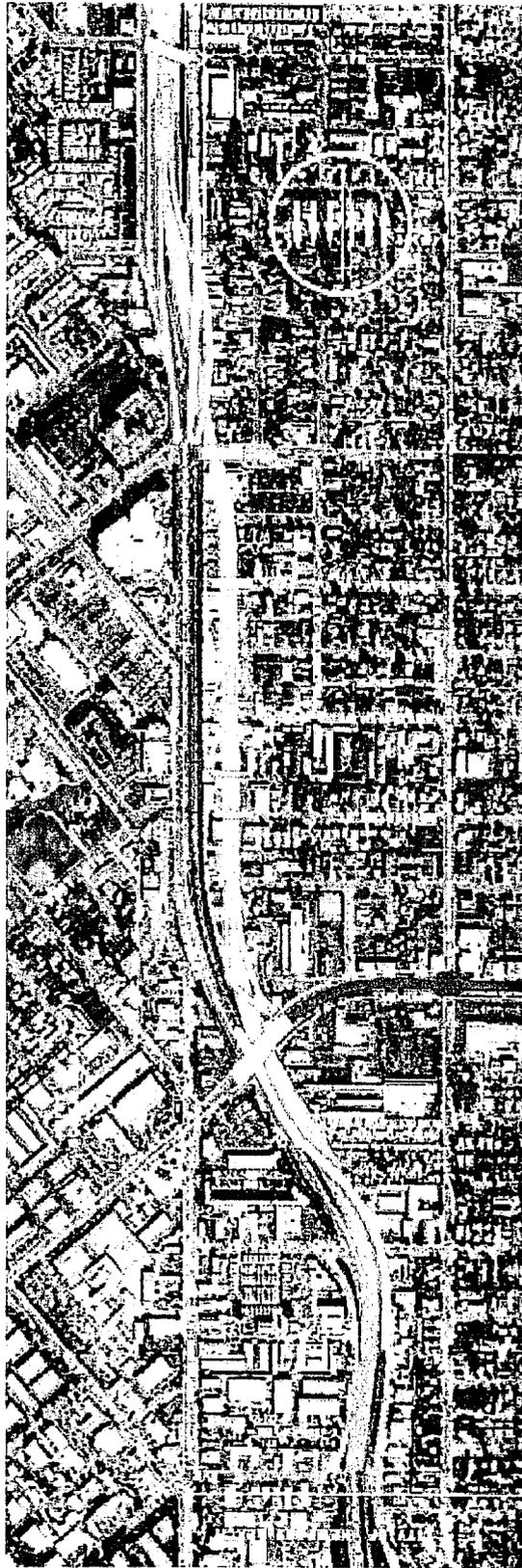
- 5 ADJUST ST-DRAW-CROSSING BLVD ON REPORT BLVD AT 17TH ST.
- 6 EXISTING CONSTRUCTION ST AND CROSSING DEWEYWAY ST
- 7 IMPROVE MOBILITY THROUGH 17TH ST.
- 8 EXCHANGE EXISTING BUS ROUTES WITH NEW ROUTES.

SRI-05 ACCESS STUDY
NO BUILD / BASELINE

Current Freeway Plan (Easterly Freeway Extension)



CURRENT FREEWAY PLAN (EASTERLY FREEWAY EXTENSION)



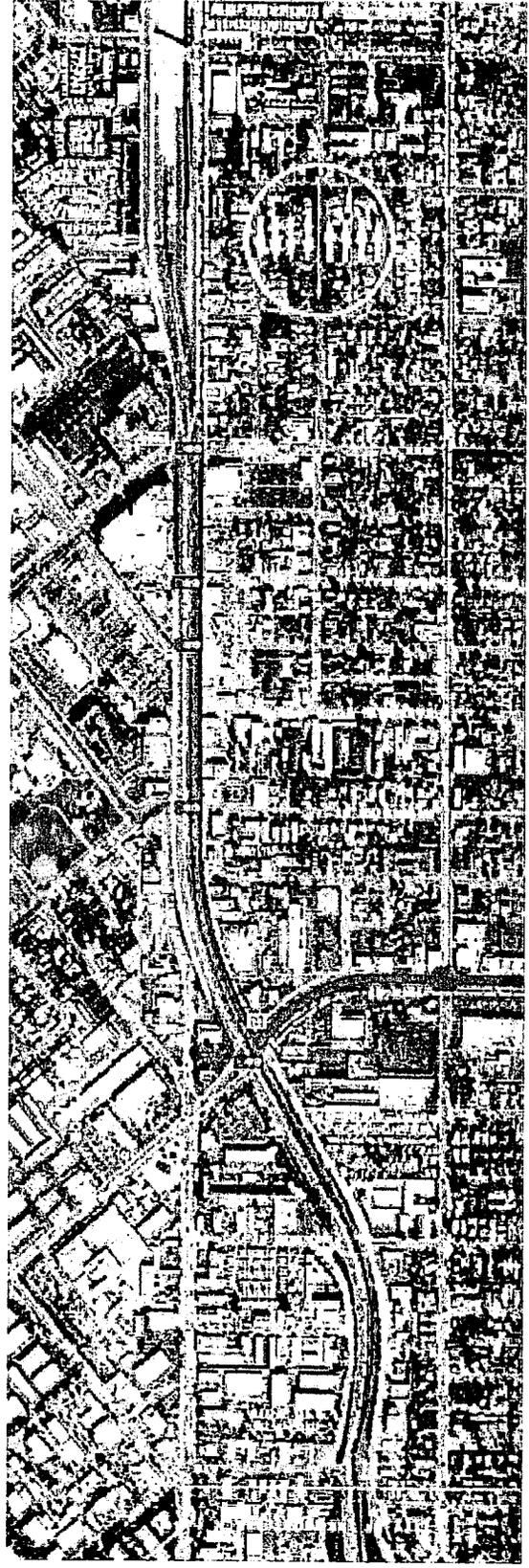
- LEGEND:**
- PROPOSED FREEWAY EXTENSION
 - PROPOSED STUDY LIMITS
 - PROPOSED RAMP
 - BASELINE IMPROVEMENTS
 - CITY LIMITS
 - EXISTING DATA BUS ROUTES
 - PROPOSED BRT ROUTES
- REMARKS:**
- 1. REALIGNMENTS OF THE FREEWAY TO THE EAST OF THE EXISTING FREEWAY WILL BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO'S POLICY ON THE RELOCATION OF FREEWAYS, THREE LANE EACH, ONE IN EACH DIRECTION.
 - 2. PROPOSED STREET RECONFIGURATIONS.
 - 3. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT 11TH ST AND 10TH ST.
- SECTION A-A**
TYPICAL SECTION A-A
NOT TO SCALE
- REMARKS:**
- 1. REALIGNMENTS OF THE FREEWAY TO THE EAST OF THE EXISTING FREEWAY WILL BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO'S POLICY ON THE RELOCATION OF FREEWAYS, THREE LANE EACH, ONE IN EACH DIRECTION.
 - 2. PROPOSED STREET RECONFIGURATIONS.
 - 3. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT 11TH ST AND 10TH ST.

SR-88 ACCESS STUDY
CURRENT FREEWAY PLAN
(EASTERLY FREEWAY EXTENSION)

Transportation System Management



TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE



- LEGEND**
- PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS
 - EXISTING STREETS
 - CITY LIMITS
 - EXISTING OCTA BUS ROUTES
 - PROPOSED BUS ROUTES
 - PROPOSED SIGNAL TIMING ADJUSTMENTS
 - EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNALS
- COMMENTS**
- 1) ADD ONE SO LANE TO MAINTAIN 4 IN AND SO LANE ON WESTSIDE SIDE OF ACCIDENTAL HIGHWAY FROM 10TH ST TO 9TH ST.
 - 2) ADD BUS TURNING.
 - 3) ADJUST SIGNAL TIMING AT INTERSECTIONS.
- PERMITS**
- 4) POTENTIAL LOSS OF STREET PARKING
 - 5) ADDITIONAL DEBT BY WAY REQUIRED

SR-05 ACCESS STUDY
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Vertical Terminal Enhancement



VERTICAL TERMINAL ENHANCEMENT



- LEGEND**
- STANDARD STREET IMPROVEMENTS
 - PAVEMENT REPAIR
 - BASELINE INFRASTRUCTURE
 - CITY LIMITS
 - EXISTING CTA BUS LINES
 - PURPOSED CTA LINES

- REQUIREMENTS**
- IMPROVE VISIBILITY TO CROSS ST. ON THE WEST SIDE OF INTERSECTION
 - ADD PLANT MATING AT INTERSECTION
 - ADD TREE MATING FROM 15TH ST TO 20TH ST
 - ADD PLANT MATING FROM 20TH ST TO 25TH ST
 - IMPROVE VISIBILITY AT 15TH ST ON THE WEST SIDE OF INTERSECTION
 - ADD PLANT MATING AT INTERSECTION
 - IMPROVE VISIBILITY ALONG SECTION AND MAY BE REQUIRED.

- IMPACTS**
- PARALLEL IMPACTS
 - OPERATIONAL HEIGHT OF NEW BUILDING
 - ADDITIONAL PROJECT DATE

SPR-88 ACCESS STUDY
VERTICAL TERMINAL ENHANCEMENT

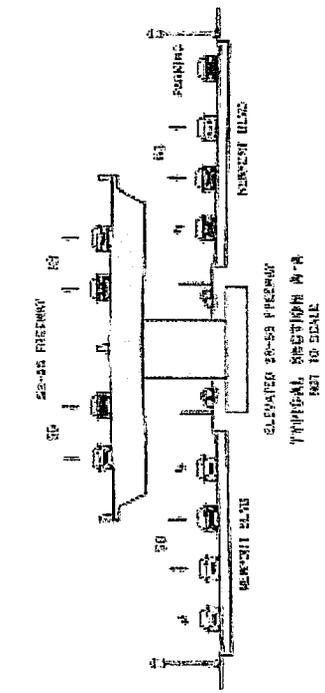
Freeway Elevated (Over Newport Blvd.)



FREeway ELEVATED OVER NEWPORT BOULEVARD ALTERNATIVE



- LEGEND**
- PROPOSED ELEVATED FREEWAY
 - EXISTING STREET IMPROVEMENTS
 - BASISLINE IMPROVEMENTS
 - DEVELOPED ZONING
 - CITY LIGHTS
 - EXISTING SIDE BUS ROUTES
 - PROPOSED BUS ROUTES



- COMMENTS**
- 1) 28-58 FREEWAY DISCONTINUED OVER NEWPORT BLVD FROM 10TH ST TO INDUSTRIAL PKWY.
 - 2) OVERPASS/UNDERPASS ACCESS FREEWAY OVER SEAPORT BLVD.
 - 3) SIDE STREET ACCESS FROM NEWPORT BLVD.
 - 4) PROVIDE INTERCHANGE AT 14TH ST.
- IMPROVEMENTS**
- HIGH POINT OF ROAD ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE ALTERNATIVE
- SR-58 ACCESS STUDY**
- FREeway ELEVATED OVER NEWPORT BOULEVARD**

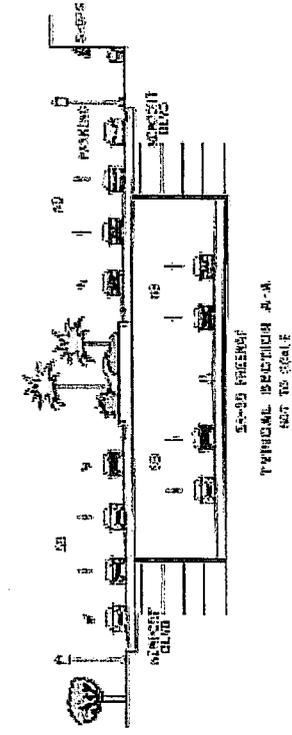
Cut / Cover Freeway (Along Newport Blvd.)



CUT/COVER FREEWAY ALONG NEWPORT BOULEVARD ALTERNATIVE



- LEGEND**
- MAINLINE FREEWAY
 - LEFT TURN
 - ASSISTED STREET
 - DEPARTMENTS
 - FRONTAGE RAWS
 - BASELINE IMPROVEMENTS
 - CITY LIGHTS
 - STAIRWAY WITH ONE DOOR
 - FRONTAGE ONE DOOR



- SEQUENCES**
- 1 CUT AND COVER WITH IMPROVED ACCESS TO ADJACENT MAIN
 - 2 CONTROLLED ACCESS FREEWAY UNDER NEWPORT BLVD.
 - 3 ONE STREET ACCESS FROM MAINSTREET
 - 4 SERVICE INTERCHANGE AT 19TH ST.
- SUBJECTS**
- BR-55 ACCESS STUDY
 - CUT/COVER FREEWAY ALONG NEWPORT BOULEVARD
 - NEW PROJECT COST

SR-55 ACCESS STUDY INITIAL SCREENING REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Route 55 (SR-55) Access Study Initial Screening Report is a cooperative effort among the Cities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) to identify potential alternatives to address mobility and congestion issues within the project area of SR-55/Newport Boulevard. The objective of this process is to identify between two and four circulation alternatives that provide improved mobility, reduced congestion, and limited environmental/community impacts within the corridor and around the general region.

The focus of this report is the SR-55/Newport Boulevard corridor between 19th Street and Industrial Way. SR-55 carries more than 100,000 average daily trips (ADT) at 19th Street. SR-55 south of 19th Street and north of 17th Street carries more than 87,000 ADT. South of 17th Street to Pacific Coast Highway, Newport Boulevard carries approximately 55,000 ADT. Analysis of circulation effects (i.e., intersection operations and level of service [LOS]) also extends to a broader study area that includes Victoria Street/22nd Street to the north, Dover Drive to the east, Pacific Coast Highway to the south, and the Santa Ana River to the west.

Traffic forecasting was conducted by OCTA staff within the overall study area and along the corridor using the latest version of the Orange County Traffic Analysis Model (OCTAM).

A Purpose and Need statement was created to provide a comprehensive and specific description of why a project should be pursued and the issues to be addressed in that pursuit. The Purpose and Need for the report is based on initial community input from stakeholders in the Cities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach (including residents and business owners), additional technical recommendations from the engineering staffs at the City of Costa Mesa, City of Newport Beach, Caltrans, and OCTA, and policy insights from city council members and members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

Based on the stated goals and objectives of the Purpose and Need statement and input from stakeholders, evaluation criteria were developed to identify the potential benefits and impacts of alternative strategies for the SR-55 project. The set of generalized goals are as follows:

1. **System Linkage.** The alternative provides a vehicular linkage to the regional and local transportation system.
2. **Capacity and Transportation Demand.** The alternative results in study area and Newport Boulevard-corridor arterial, intersection and freeway operations that meet municipal/agency standards or are no worse than baseline operations.
3. **Legislation/Compatibility with Plans.** The alternative provides a solution that is compatible with the Caltrans State Route Concept Report, County Master Plan of Arterial Highways, and Costa Mesa and Newport Beach General Plans.

4. **Social Demands/Economic Development.** The alternative will not create significant neighborhood and business impacts and will reduce these issues as they currently exist. The alternative will have economic, social and aesthetic benefits to the area.
5. **Modal Interrelationships.** The alternative does not preclude current or planned fixed-route OCTA bus service or future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service within the Newport Boulevard corridor.
6. **Project Enhancements/Safety/Roadway Deficiencies.** The alternative meets all applicable Caltrans, County, and municipal design standards to address vehicular and pedestrian safety.
7. **Implementation.** The alternative does not exhibit major impediments to secure necessary agency approvals or funding, or require unanticipated right-of-way (ROW) to implement.

A public outreach program was implemented to share information, increase awareness, and gather input from key stakeholders and local community members. The project team communicated with the public through open houses, workshops, online surveys, direct mailers and e-mail announcements. The public feedback generated from the outreach program was combined with technical analysis to develop the following seven transportation alternatives to address the Purpose and Need of the SR-55 Access Study.

- **Alternative 1 – No Build/Baseline:** Implements the City of Costa Mesa's planned improvements along the Newport Boulevard corridor while maintaining the existing SR-55/Newport Boulevard arterial configuration.
- **Alternative 2 – Current Freeway Plan:** A depressed six-lane freeway section in an easterly alignment per the existing freeway agreement.
- **Alternative 3 – Transportation System Management (TSM):** Includes an additional southbound lane to maintain four northbound and southbound lanes on Newport Boulevard as a conventional highway from 19th Street to 17th Street.
- **Alternative 4 – Improved Conventional Highway (Newport Boulevard Only):** Intended to demonstrate the extent of improvements should a conventional highway solution be pursued.
- **Alternative 5 – Vertical Terminal Enhancement:** Provides an incremental approach of improving the corridor's traffic flow by first addressing the terminals (i.e., 19th Street, 17th Street and Superior Avenue) in order to improve congestion within the corridor.
- **Alternative 6 – Freeway Elevated over Newport Boulevard:** Construction of an overhead viaduct above Newport Boulevard from 19th Street to Industrial Way.
- **Alternative 7 – Cut/Cover Freeway along Newport Boulevard:** Construction of an entirely new structure below Newport Boulevard providing a four-lane controlled access freeway under Newport Boulevard from 19th Street to Industrial Way and an interchange at 19th Street.

Alternative 4 was removed from further consideration as it is simply a demonstration of the conventional capital needs to satisfy future travel demand. The seven alternatives were then subject to further input from the public and were refined accordingly. Each alternative was then screened to rule out those concepts and strategies that would not advance the project Purpose and Need, and to identify those concepts and strategies that achieve the greatest concurrence with the Purpose and Need, and warrant more detailed engineering and environmental analysis.

Based on the full or significant achievement of the evaluation criteria and Purpose and Need, the following alternatives are recommended for further analysis and consideration in subsequent, more detailed studies:

- Alternative 1 – No Build/Baseline Condition
- Alternative 5 – Vertical Terminal Enhancement
- Alternative 7 – Cut/Cover Freeway along Newport Boulevard

These alternatives may be considered as individual improvement projects or in combination with elements of other alternatives to maximize congestion relief while minimizing community intrusion and impacts. The TSM alternative has not been screened out. Instead, it is recommended that the affected agencies consider the strategies and components of the TSM alternative to provide short-range congestion relief.