



# **PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 9, 2012

ITEM NUMBER: VII. 1

SUBJECT: I-405 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

DATE: DECEMBER 21, 2011

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

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## **DESCRIPTION:**

The I-405 Freeway Improvement Project is proposed by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) between the SR-73 and the I-605 Freeways. OCTA is considering several project alternatives to widen the I-405 Freeway by adding one or two lanes in each direction.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive a status update regarding the I-405 Freeway Improvement Project.

**RAJA SETHURAMAN**  
Transportation Services Manager

**CLAIRE FLYNN**  
Interim Asst. Development Svcs. Director

## **BACKGROUND:**

Over the past several years, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in association with the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the cities adjacent to the I-405 Freeway Corridor between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways, has been working on the I-405 Freeway Improvement Project. The goal of the project is to analyze a series of alternatives to improve the capacity in this portion of the freeway. Three alternatives are being considered in this study:

- **Alternative 1** – Add one lane in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway; and
- **Alternative 2** – Add two lanes in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway.
- **Alternative 3** – Add one lane in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway, and add High Occupancy Toll (HOT)/Express Lanes on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways. This will result in a conversion of the existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane to a toll express lane and the addition of a second express lane. In addition, the project includes a direct HOV lane to express lane connectors between the SR-73 and I-405 Freeways.

The City of Costa Mesa participated in the project development with representation in the Policy Advisory Committee by Mayor Monahan and prior Mayor Mansoor, and in the Technical Advisory Committee by the Transportation Services Manager. Mayor Pro Tem Righeimer was appointed to the Policy Advisory Committee in early 2011.

## **ANALYSIS:**

Staff presented a detailed report on the I-405 Freeway Improvement Project to the City Council at the regular meeting of May 17, 2011 (Attachment 1). The report included the discussion of alternatives and comment letters received in opposition to Alternative 3 from several residents in the vicinity of the I-405 Freeway. An update on the project was presented to the City Council by OCTA on November 1, 2011.

The Environmental Document preparation for the I-405 Freeway Improvement Project is currently under way and the draft document for public review is expected to be released in early 2012. The City has provided comments on the technical analysis during the course of project development.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

As this is a status update presentation, no alternatives are presented.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

As the project is proposed within the Caltrans jurisdiction, there is no environmental action by the City.

## **CONCLUSION:**

OCTA has initiated the Project Report/Environmental Documentation phase of the I-405 Freeway Improvement Project. The OCTA Board initially approved consideration of a one-lane

or two-lane addition to the freeway north of the Santa Ana River in February 2006. However, during the initial stages of project development, an additional alternative (Alternative 3) was added to the study. This alternative includes addition of HOT/Express Lanes on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways.

The environmental document preparation is nearly complete with a draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) scheduled to be released in early 2012.

Attachments: 1 - I-405 Freeway Improvement Project Council Agenda Report - May 17, 2011

Distribution: Chief Executive Officer  
Interim Assistant Chief Executive Officer  
City Attorney  
Interim Development Services Director  
Interim City Engineer  
Staff  
File



# **CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: MAY 17, 2011

ITEM NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT:** I-405 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**DATE:** MAY 5, 2011

**FROM:** PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIVISION

**PRESENTATION BY:** PETER NAGHAVI, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES  
DIRECTOR

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

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Provide direction on I-405 Improvement Project alternatives and authorize staff to transmit resident comments and petitions to Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).

## **BACKGROUND:**

Over the past several years, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in association with the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the cities adjacent to the I-405 Corridor between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways, has been working on the I-405 Improvement Project. The goal of the project is to analyze a series of alternatives to improve the capacity in this portion of the freeway.

The City of Costa Mesa participated in the project development with representation in the Policy Advisory Committee by Mayor Monahan and prior Mayor Mansoor, and in the Technical Advisory Committee by the Transportation Services Manager. Mayor Pro Tem Righeimer was appointed to the Policy Advisory Committee in early 2011.

The I-405 Improvement Project has progressed from the Major Investment Study (MIS) phase to Project Report/Environmental Documentation phase. At the conclusion of the MIS phase, the OCTA Board of Directors recommended alternatives for further study, which generally consisted of a **one-lane** or **two-lane** addition to the I-405 Freeway from north of the Santa Ana River to the I-605 Freeway. The alternatives, depicted in Attachment 1, included:

- **Alternative 1** – Add one lane in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway; and
- **Alternative 2** – Add two lanes in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway.

Until this point in the study, there was no freeway widening proposed within the Costa Mesa City limits with the above two alternatives.

About five years ago, the City, in cooperation with OCTA and Caltrans, completed two major freeway widening projects; the I-405/SR-55 Transitway Project and I-405/SR-73 Confluence Project. These projects resulted in the construction of new freeway onramps and offramps, reconfiguration of ramps, and widening of the freeway within Costa Mesa City limits to the ultimate configuration as called for by agencies. However, during the initial stages of this new project development, in January 2009, the OCTA Board approved an additional alternative for study involving express lanes between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways. The following alternative was added:

- **Alternative 3** – Add one lane in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway, and add High Occupancy Toll (HOT)/Express Lanes on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways. This will result in a conversion of the existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane to a toll express lane and the addition of a second express lane. In addition, the project includes a direct HOV lane to express lane connectors between the SR-73 and I-405 Freeways.

The project with Alternatives 1 and 2 was originally estimated at approximately \$600 million. This estimate was revised later to approximately \$1.4 billion due to the need for reconstruction of several interchanges and bridges along the I-405 Freeway north of the Santa Ana River. In order to finance this higher than estimated cost, the consideration of HOT/express lanes was included as an additional alternative (Alternative 3). The cost estimate for Alternative 3 is approximately \$1.7 billion. This new alternative was primarily added to address potential funding issues for the implementation of the entire project.

The three alternatives were presented to City Council at the April 12, 2011, Study Session. Staff also presented the input provided by the community on the Project Alternative 3 through letters/e-mails and petitions, and requested City Council approval to forward these correspondences to OCTA. The City Council directed staff to place this item on regular meeting agenda for further discussion and direction.

On April 25, 2011, OCTA staff presented a financial analysis report to their Board of Directors. Based on that report, Alternatives 1 and 2 have potential funding deficiencies of approximately \$700 million and \$800 million, respectively. Based on updated revenue estimates from HOT/Express Lanes for Alternative 3, it is forecasted that there is a potential deficit of \$600 million for its implementation.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The I-405 Improvement Project is envisioned to address the existing and future demands on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways. A few years ago, the Costa Mesa portion of the I-405 Freeway, the section south of the Santa Ana River, was widened to its ultimate configuration as part of the I-405/SR-73 Confluence project. There are seven or eight mixed flow lanes and a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction within Costa Mesa City limits. However, north of the Santa Ana River, past the Euclid Street interchange, the number of lanes on the I-405 Freeway drops to four mixed flow lanes and one HOV lane in each direction. This results in significant back up of traffic on the freeway as well as diversion of traffic to other parallel arterials.

The proposed improvements originally approved by the OCTA Board in February 2006, considered the potential right-of-way impact of widening, and limited the alternatives to those that would add one or two lanes in each direction generally within the existing freeway right-of-way. The initial plans for this project, therefore, did not include any widening or impacts in Costa Mesa. However, the proposed new alternative (Alternative 3) to add express lanes between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways, and a direct connector between the SR-73 and I-405 Freeways, will require widening within the Costa Mesa City limits.

Alternative 3, which is the HOT/Express Lane Alternative, will result in the widening of the freeway, thereby bringing the new lanes closer to the neighborhoods within the Costa Mesa section and will also create significant potential aesthetic impacts due to new direct connector ramps between the I-405 and SR-73 Freeways. In addition, the Fairview Road Bridge over the I-405 Freeway will need to be demolished and replaced to accommodate proposed new HOT/Express lanes. Within Costa Mesa City limits, Alternative 3 will result in the conversion of an existing free HOV lane to a HOT/Express lane. However, there will be no addition of a mixed flow lane in either direction. North of the Santa Ana River, the HOT/Express lane alternative adds one mixed flow and one express lane and converts the existing HOV lane to a HOT/Express lane.

While the Express Lane Alternative 3 improves the operations of express lanes, projected traffic conditions for a **majority** of motorists traveling on the mixed flow lanes are expected to improve with the implementation of Alternative 2. This is because Alternative 2 adds two mixed flow lanes in each direction that will benefit a majority of motorists traveling on those lanes. Within Costa Mesa City limits, there is no change to the number of mixed flow lanes under any of the Alternatives.

The potential impact of Alternative 3 is a significant concern to the residents of Costa Mesa, especially those adjacent to the I-405 Freeway. Over the past few months, staff has provided presentations on the proposed I-405 Improvement Project, including Alternative 3, to various neighborhood associations in the vicinity of the I-405 Freeway. The general consensus among the residents is that the ultimate improvements to I-405 Freeway were already completed in Costa Mesa as part of the SR-73/I-405 Confluence Project and that these new proposed improvements in Alternative 3 are not needed, do not benefit the City, and are intrusive to the residents. The City received several letters/e-mails and petitions from over 260 residents in opposition to Alternative 3. The letters/e-mails are included as Attachment 2, and the petitions are available for review at the City Hall Public Services Counter.

The Environmental Document preparation for the I-405 Improvement Project is currently underway and the draft document for public review is expected to be released in early 2012.

#### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

No alternatives other than those proposed as part of this project are presented.

#### **FISCAL REVIEW:**

There is no fiscal impact to the City with the presentation of this item.

#### **LEGAL REVIEW:**

Legal review is not required for this item at this time.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

OCTA has initiated the Project Report/Environmental Documentation phase of the I-405 Improvement Project. The OCTA Board initially approved consideration of a one-lane or two-lane addition to the Freeway north of the Santa Ana River in February 2006. However, during the initial stages of project development, an additional alternative (Alternative 3) was added to the study. This alternative includes addition of HOT/Express Lanes on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways.

The addition of HOT/Express Lanes will result in widening of the I-405 Freeway within Costa Mesa City limits and will require total reconstruction of the Fairview Road Bridge over the I-405 Freeway. While the widening will be within Caltrans' right-of-way, the resultant freeway widening will result in mainline lanes pushed outward closer to residential development on both sides of the Freeway.

Based on traffic analyses submitted to date, the proposed improvements do not significantly benefit the City, and the potential widening of the freeway and reconstruction of Fairview Road/I-405 Interchange creates significant impacts to the community. The area residents have submitted several letters and petitions opposing further consideration of Alternative 3 within the City limits.

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Raja Sethuraman, Manager  
Transportation Services

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Peter Naghavi, Director  
Department of Public Services

ATTACHMENTS:    1 - Proposed I-405 Improvement Alternatives  
                          2 - Letters/E-Mails from Residents

DISTRIBUTION:    Chief Executive Officer  
                          Assistant Chief Executive Officer  
                          City Attorney  
                          City Clerk  
                          Development Services Director

5-17-11-I-405 Improvement Project

5/5/11

9:00 a.m.

Figure 2-1: Lane Configurations, Northbound

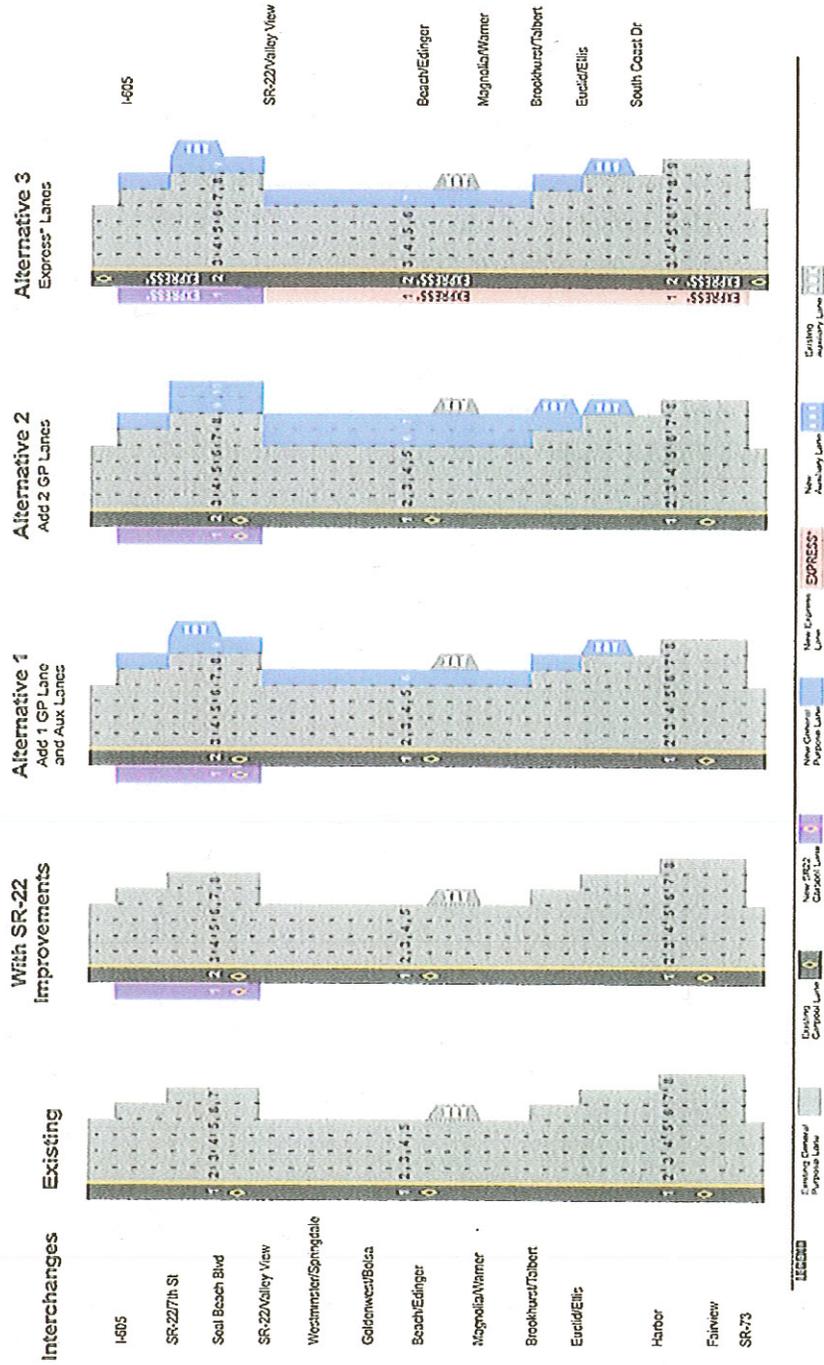
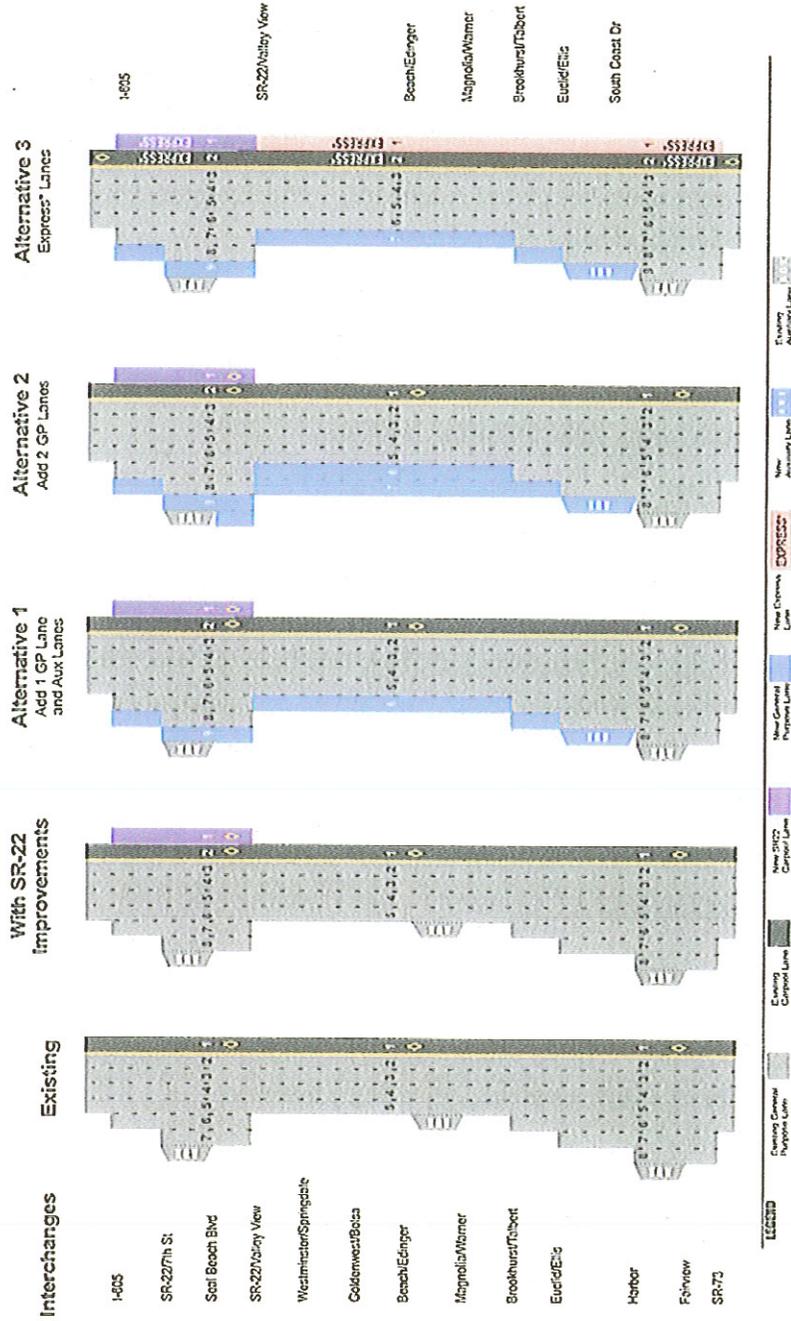


Figure 2-2: Lane Configurations, Southbound



ATTACHMENT 2



**Gary R. Peacock, CPA**

3063 Johnson Ave.  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626-2818  
Phone (714) 545-8661  
Email: peacockgr@aol.com

October 19, 2010

Mr. Peter Naghavi, Director  
Department of Public Services  
City of Costa Mesa  
P.O. Box 1200  
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-1200

Re: Expansion of 405 Freeway through Costa Mesa

Dear Mr. Naghavi:

Thanks to you and Mr. Raja Sethuraman for both taking your personal time to brief the Directors and other members of Mesa North Community Association yesterday evening on the 405 Freeway Expansion project.

I am sure every one using this stretch of freeway would be in favor of improvements that eliminate to traffic compression caused by the lane reductions between the interception of the 605 Freeway and Harbor Blvd. I recall that when I lived in Laguna Beach some years ago, I would often avoid that stretch by taking Pacific Coast Highway to avoid the 405 congestion. Now that said, the widening will, no doubt, attract more traffic on the 405.

Since the added lanes would bring traffic closer to the sound walls, is it practical to raise their height to deflect the inevitable exhaust fumes from the traffic? If there are other ways to reduce the toxic emissions on the residents, I think that would be an important consideration. After all, public health is a consequence that has ethical and financial costs to the public.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gary Peacock".

Gary Peacock

Cc: Colin McCarthy  
President, MNCA

## SETHURAMAN, RAJA

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**From:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Sent:** Monday, November 22, 2010 8:24 AM  
**To:** 'jacknpeg91@ca.rr.com'  
**Cc:** ROEDER, ALLAN; SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Subject:** RE: 405 Expansion Project

Dear John and Margaret Higgins :

Thank you very much for your email and input with regards to proposed I-405 widening project.

While these alternatives are currently under review, no specific alternative has been selected as yet. Like you, many other local residents have voiced their concerns with one or more alternatives. Costa Mesa staff will collect all local concerns and will submit them to OCTA for their information and record.

Thanks again for caring about our community.

Peter Naghavi, Director  
Dept. of Public Services  
City of Costa Mesa, CA

-----Original Message-----

**From:** jacknpeg91@ca.rr.com [mailto:jacknpeg91@ca.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 20, 2010 2:20 PM.  
**To:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Subject:** 405 Expansion Project

Dear Mr Naghavi,

I write to protest Alternative 3 of the 405 Freeway expansion plan. This plan has a detrimental impact on Costa Mesa not only through significant inconvenience to local citizens but also the potential for negative financial impact to the City. The communities south of the 405 from Euclid to Bristol would experience increased freeway noise as the lanes would be pushed closer to the sound walls and neighborhoods (e.g., Gisler park sound wall). This plan would also make it more difficult to travel locally and would not make for convenient exiting of potential customers passing through the City.

This proposed I-405 widening project provides insignificant and minimal benefit to Costa Mesa residents and I encourage you and our City Council to reject it.

Thank you,  
John & Margaret Higgins  
Costa Mesa Residents since 1991

**SETHURAMAN, RAJA**

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**From:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Sent:** Monday, November 15, 2010 8:33 AM  
**To:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Subject:** FW: Proposed I-405 HOT plans

*Peter Naghavi, Director  
Dept. of Public Services  
City of Costa Mesa, CA*

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**From:** The Stovers [mailto:calcs1224@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 15, 2010 8:04 AM  
**To:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Subject:** Proposed I-405 HOT plans

The plans to add HOT lanes to access Toll-73 from and to I-405 are examples of wasteful spending, and not compatible for the community with elevated ramping. (Work completed at the Fairview bridge across I-405 caused traffic slowdowns far too long.)

Using private financing would benefit toll road users at the inconvenience to through traffic on I-405. We are occasional users of the toll road and find it used sparsely. Consider more lanes from South 55 to North 405 Instead!

Corinne Stover

11/22/2010

**SETHURAMAN, RAJA**

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**From:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Sent:** Monday, November 15, 2010 8:31 AM  
**To:** 'rschowe173@aol.com'  
**Cc:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Subject:** RE: HOV-HOT LANES ON THE 405

Thank you and we will make sure to provide your comments to OCTA.

*Peter Naghavi, Director  
Dept. of Public Services  
City of Costa Mesa, CA*

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**From:** rschowe173@aol.com [mailto:rschowe173@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 14, 2010 8:53 AM  
**To:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Subject:** HOV-HOT LANES ON THE 405

**Dear Sir,**

**I think this project would place yet another burden upon those who use the 405 freeway every day to go to work. Taking away the regular Car Pool lane would require those who need such a lane or its equivalent to pay for the privilege which is now free to those who are qualified to use the lane. I do not see how this could benefit the City of Costa Mesa where I live.**

**Best regards,**

**Richard N. Schowengerdt  
714-546-7357**

11/22/2010

**SETHURAMAN, RAJA**

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**From:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 28, 2010 10:07 AM  
**To:** 'Steve F'  
**Cc:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Subject:** RE: 405 Widening Project to add toll roads

Thank you for your email Steve.  
We will forward your email to OCTA.

*Peter Naghavi, Director  
Dept. of Public Services  
City of Costa Mesa, CA*

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**From:** Steve F [mailto:beancounter-1@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2010 8:25 PM  
**To:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Subject:** 405 Widening Project to add toll roads

To Whom It May Concern:

As residents of the Halecrest track in North Costa Mesa, my entire family strongly opposes the proposed project to widen the 405 freeway near Fairview to add 405 toll lanes and eliminate the car pool lane.

My family uses Gisler Park near the freeway daily to walk to including taking my grandson Monday through Friday. The noise level even with the soundwall is already too much for the park and the homes next to the park. We oppose increased noise.

They just completed a \$7 million project to widen the Fairview bridge. Now that money would be somewhat wasted by additional construction which is a further Fairview traffic burden on our Costa Mesa community which will not benefit by this new project.

Please do not do this and cancel this project.

Steve French (3058 Murray Lane, Costa Mesa 92626)  
Maritza French  
Verna French  
Erika Browell

Danielle Tokarz (102 Pinon Tree Lane, Costa Mesa 92627)  
Matt Tokarz  
Rowan Tokarz

11/22/2010

## SETHURAMAN, RAJA

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**From:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 28, 2010 10:05 AM  
**To:** 'stevem@lis1.net'  
**Cc:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Subject:** RE: Can 405 HOT Lane Funding be used to build Reverse Toll Booths?

Thank you for your email. We will certainly include this email as part of a general package to OCTA at some point. I would however, like to make a comment about using "HOT" lane funds towards other things such as ped. Bridges.... At this time, there is no "HOT" lane funding available. The funding will only become a reality if there is indeed a "HOT" lane in operation that generates the funding source, such as sale of bonds etc....

Peter Naghavi, Director  
Dept. of Public Services  
City of Costa Mesa, CA

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Steve Mariani [mailto:stevem@lis1.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2010 5:47 PM  
**To:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Subject:** Can 405 HOT Lane Funding be used to build Reverse Toll Booths?

Instead of demolishing perfectly good new bridges on the 405, why not use the CAL TRANS HOT Lane money to build new WIDE pedestrian bridges that will attract pedestrians, bikes and golf carts. This will divert local traffic off the 405 at rush hour and lower emissions.

Imagine being able to walk, bike or golf cart over a wide bridge from residential park areas to commercial shopping areas across the 405.

Metro Point and IKEA come to mind. Most residents would prefer to walk, bike or Golf Cart all the time if it was safe and enjoyable.

OCC students would also have a safe, enjoyable path to bike to school or to go off campus for lunch.

HOT Lane funding could also be used to create a fund for "reverse" toll booths that dispense store coupons with a hour time stamp on them to encourage bridge use to go shopping at the malls. Everyone wins.

Cal Trans gets to build new bridges and toll booths and life in Costa Mesa gets upgraded.

The Department of Transportation will convert our town into an carelessly planned inner-city if we just roll with the default vision of the central planners in Sacramento and in DC. Was Costa Mesa made for the Freeway or was the Freeway made for Costa Mesa?

Best regards,  
Steve Mariani  
3062 Murray LN  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**SETHURAMAN, RAJA**

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**From:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Sent:** Monday, November 22, 2010 9:29 AM  
**To:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Subject:** FW: 405 MIS

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**From:** mike brumbaugh [mailto:mlbrum@att.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 22, 2010 8:43 AM  
**To:** SETHURAMAN, RAJA  
**Cc:** NAGHAVI, PETER  
**Subject:** Re: 405 MIS

Thank you gentlemen. Mike Brumbaugh

- The goal is to connect the 73 with the 605 freeway with additional lanes
- The project cost is projected to be \$1.7 billion
- Alternative 3 is the only one that impacts Costa Mesa
- Alternate 3 adds two additional lanes to the 405 that will be "HOT" lanes (High occupancy/toll lanes) and eliminates the car pool lane
- The 405 would be widened for the additional lanes and would push the lanes closer to the sound walls and neighborhoods (e.g. lanes closer to Gisler park sound wall) and could increase traffic noise
- The newly re-constructed Fairview Rd. bridge would have to be re-constructed again to make it wider for the additional lanes under it. The I-405 widening project that was completed almost 10 years ago was done for a traffic volume/speed demand with a forecast year of 2020. The cost for the recent bridge widening construction was 7 million dollars.
- This proposed I-405 widening project provides insignificant and minimal benefit to Costa Mesa residents who travel the 405 locally. People who currently travel the toll roads daily from Costa Mesa to some destination may see the benefit.
- It is not currently known where and if there will be a convenient entrance to the new "HOT" lanes from our community. It may also be difficult to exit the "HOT" lanes into our city.

11/22/2010