



LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE
Meeting Action Report

Committee: Transportation

Members: City Representative Beto O'Rourke (Chair)
City Representative Susie Byrd
City Representative Steve Ortega
City Representative Rachel Quintana (absent)

Date of Meeting: February 18, 2010

- I. Discussion and action to provide direction for incorporating a Project(s), that will help to reduce border wait times, into the City's 2010 Federal Legislative Agenda. Projects to be discussed are:
- El Paso County Secure Border Trade Demonstration Project
 - Bluetooth Technology at the Border to Measure Passenger Vehicle Crossing Times
 - RFID Based Technology to Measure Crossing Times of Commercial Vehicles
 - SENTRI lanes for pedestrians;
 - Mass Transit infrastructure and passenger drop off/pick up areas at all ports of entry

Summary:

Presentations regarding El Paso County's demonstration project, Bluetooth technology and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology were made to the LRC as potential technology projects to address border wait times. The LRC questioned the need to spend funds to measure waiting times and stated that funding should be directed towards reducing wait times. Staff explained that no standard exists to measure wait times and that the ability to measure wait times can help Customs and Border Protection to provide adequate staffing at appropriate times, thereby reducing wait times. The issue of long wait times at the bridges has been discussed for quite some time and the LRC expressed frustration that the federal government has not been able to develop a solution. The LRC wants staff to develop a more aggressive action plan to address bridge wait times. The solution needs to be developed locally rather than waiting for a solution from the Federal Government. Staff needs to coordinate with the business community to solve the issue of waiting times at the bridges, present a technology for implementation by the Federal Government and bring back to City Council a request to help fund all or part of the cost. Staff mentioned that technology alone will not address bridge wait times because numerous issues need to be addressed collectively to address bridge wait times. Staff mentioned that the Master Regional Ports of Entry Operations Plan, a strategic business and implementation plan for the bridges, will provide a road map to address bridge wait times.

Staff also discussed the need to advertise the pedestrian SENTRI lane and the need to incorporate mass transit infrastructure improvements at the bridges to allow for multimodal transit at bridges which will help to move people across the border.

Action Taken:

The LRC voted 3-0 to support El Paso County's Secure Border Trade Demonstration Project, to include the project and a funding placeholder in the City's Federal Legislative Agenda and to request staff to work with the business community (such as the Central Business Association and the Border Trade Alliance) to develop suggestions to address bridge wait times.

Disposition:

The LRC's recommendations will be discussed at the February 23, 2010 City Council meeting when the City Council will be requested to approve federal and state legislative priorities for the City.

SUBMITTED BY:

City Representative Beto O'Rourke, District 8
Chair, Transportation LRC

Jane Shang, Deputy City Manager
City Manager – Mobility Services