



City of San Marino

Memorandum

TO: Interested Community Members

FROM: Michael Throne, PE, Director of Parks and Public Works/City Engineer

DATE: June 24, 2019

**SUBJECT: RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE JUNE 10, 2019
MEASURE R 710 PUBLIC INPUT GATHERING MEETING**

At least as far back as the summer of 2017, the San Marino Interim City Manager began discussions with the City Managers of San Gabriel, Monterey Park, and Rosemead for the purpose of making sure that Measure R funds Metro was going to use for the 710 tunnel could be made available to them. At the time, it was apparent that Metro would decide not to pursue the tunnel option for completion of the 710, and surrounding cities were concerned Metro might elect to instead direct the allocated funding to Alhambra and South Pasadena only. Rosemead dropped out of the group and the remaining three agencies came up with lists of projects that would prompt Metro to offer funds to us.

On September 22, 2017, the City Council appointed San Marino resident Hal Suetsugu as a special liaison to Metro to advise staff in coming up with projects. Mr. Suetsugu met with Metro engineers to learn what type of projects Metro would approve. He then met with city staff to flesh-out the original proposals that went to the Public Safety Commission in November 2018 and to the Metro board in December 2018.

The preliminary list of projects was communicated to the City Council by Interim Manager Collins on October 4, 2017 stating:

“You may be aware that Caltrans’ tunnel alternative will not be going forward and the Metro Board is preparing alternatives to deal with the future impacts of not having the 710 continue north. Consequently, Metro and Caltrans representatives have met with myself and Michael to encourage the development of a proposed project list as a means to expedite funding when the Metro Board finalizes its next steps expected early next year. We have been meeting with our counterparts in neighboring cities (San Gabriel, Monterey Park and Rosemead) to collaborate and compile a master list of projects to be potentially funded by the funds slated for the Measure R/710 North project.”

The following is a list of potential projects that are anticipated to be eligible for funding from Metro. We have been in contact with the School District Superintendent about our mutual traffic problems in order to form a partnership, and the list reflects those discussions.

- 1. Establishment of student drop-off lanes at SMHS/Valentine/Huntington/Carver schools (cooperative project with the school district). Intended to improve pedestrian safety and traffic congestion on Huntington Dr.*
- 2. Off-street parking over Rubio Wash at SMHS (joint project with the school district). Intended to improve pedestrian safety and traffic congestion on Huntington Dr.*
- 3. Underground parking at the San Marino Center (joint project with the school district). Intended to improve pedestrian safety and traffic congestion on Huntington Dr.*
- 4. Intersection improvements on Huntington Drive at Los Robles Av/Garfield Av/Atlantic Blvd (joint project with city of Alhambra). Intended to improve pedestrian safety and traffic congestion on Huntington Dr.*
- 5. Intersection improvements on Huntington Drive at San Gabriel Blvd (joint project with LA Co). Intended to improve pedestrian safety and traffic congestion on Huntington Dr.*
- 6. Transportation and circulation master plan (collaborative work with adjoining jurisdictions). Intended to comprehensively identify and recommend solutions and opportunities to mitigate, reduce or eliminate regional traffic impacts (volume, speed, congestion, cut-through) to the City's streets and roads.*
- 7. Improvements to Huntington Drive to reduce cut-through commuter traffic on neighborhood streets. Intended to improve safety by reducing speeds and volumes by discouraging convenient access to neighborhood streets.*
- 8. Improvements to entry points citywide to direct commuter traffic onto major streets by discouraging convenient access to neighborhood streets. Intended to improve local street safety by reducing speeds and volumes.*

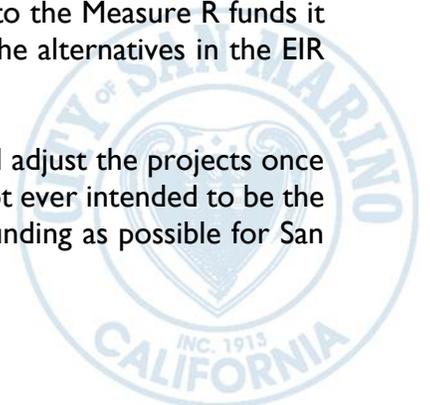
Let me know if you have addition potential projects you would like to add to the list or if you have any concerns with the projects listed. This list is preliminary and can be modified.”

Subsequent to discussions in the intervening period between city staff, Mr. Suetsugu and Metro engineers, Metro pared down the preliminary list to the five proposals that Metro staff said were consistent with the intent of the 701 environmental document. Those five proposals went to the Metro board in December 2018.

The Public Safety Commission has discussed and reviewed this matter at their regular meetings of November 19, 2018, January 21, 2019 and February 25, 2019. Commissioners (and members of the public) also attended a city manager town hall on this topic on April 1, 2019, plus two input gathering meetings of May 14, 2019 and June 10, 2019.

Metro only provided the City with the draft SR 710 North environmental impact report (EIR) and emailed/verbal instructions that if the City wanted to have access to the Measure R funds it would have to match projects to their tunnel alternatives. Staff used the alternatives in the EIR to develop the original proposals.

Metro's guidance was that we would have an opportunity to refine and adjust the projects once the funding was allocated, meaning that the submitted projects were not ever intended to be the "final" projects. At the time, the City's goal was to secure as much funding as possible for San



Marino with the intention of engaging the community once we knew how much money would be available to us.

After engaging the community, staff's intention is/was to adjust the projects, present the refined projects to the community again for feedback, and then request formal City Council approval on those projects. At that point, the approved projects would be re-submitted to Metro for final confirmation of funding status.

Community engagement began in November 2018, with the series of public meetings noted above, and continues to the present Public Safety Commission meeting – Monday, June 24, 2019.

On Monday, June 10, 2019, as part of this first round of community engagement, the City hosted a community meeting related to the Metro Measure R/710 Funds. That meeting was facilitated by Arup North America, an outside independent firm. Questions and comments from attendees were recorded by Arup staff and are listed below, with the expectation and commitment that the City would reply carefully. Arup divided the questions and comments into general categories. The City's informational responses are provided below in *italicized* print.

Process Questions:

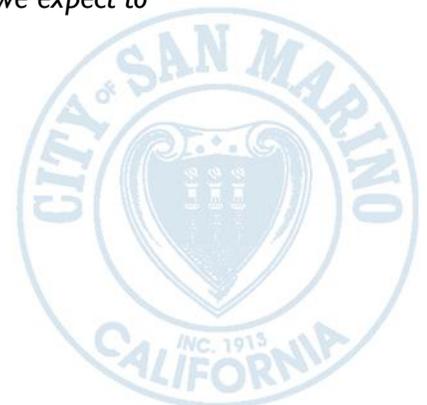
1. Is the Council aware of all developments in the Metro process? Did they know about and approve the 5 proposals in consideration?

City Response:

The City Council was made aware in September of 2017 that Metro would be seeking proposals from local government for redirection of the 710 tunnel funds. At that time, Council appointed a volunteer to advise staff in its relationship with Metro. On October 4, 2017, Interim City Manager Cindy Collins advised the City Council, in the email shown above, that staff had communicated with other cities and the San Marino Unified School District and provided a list of suggested projects.

The current City Manager has also kept the current City Council Members informed of the Metro process, including sending them a list of the five submitted proposals on November 21, 2018 and informed them it is their decision to accept or reject the proposals.

We are only just approaching the time for the City Council to approve, reject, or direct staff to modify the existing proposals, which we expect to do at the July 26, 2019 meeting.



2. Who originated the 5 proposals - Metro or the City - and when were they submitted? Why were they submitted without input from residents?

City Response:

The proposals originated by the City. The projects were designed to align with the non-tunnel alternatives of Metro's 710 project. City staff and the City Council-appointed Metro citizen liaison (San Marino resident Hal Suetsugu) reviewed prior traffic plans prepared for the City and the school district, and prepared the original proposals.

The projects were submitted to Metro on August 14, 2018.

Metro's guidance was that we would have an opportunity to refine and adjust the projects once the funding was allocated, meaning that the submitted projects were not ever intended to be the "final" projects. At the time, the City's goal was to secure as much funding as possible for San Marino with the intention of engaging the community once we knew how much money would be available to us.

3. Why doesn't the staff withdraw the 5 proposals if San Marino residents are not happy?

City Response:

Staff cannot because it is the decision of the City Council whether to (1) accept the funds for the original proposed projects, (2) modify them in some way, or (3) reject some or all of the projects and the funds outright. We expect the City Council to consider this question at the July 26, 2019 meeting.

4. Who is the ultimate decision-maker on whether San Marino takes the money?

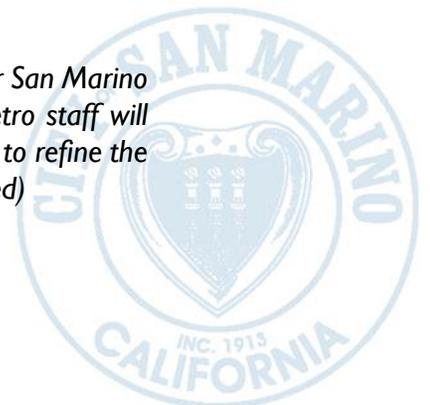
City Response:

The San Marino City Council.

5. What is the deadline to accept the money from Metro? Are the proposals fluid – can they be changed?

City Response:

The Metro board is voting to affirm that funds are reserved for San Marino in July. Once the board affirms that funds are reserved, Metro staff will begin working with San Marino, if desired by the City Council, to refine the projects in a way that meets our community needs. (continued)



As long as the projects meet the same general goals, the proposals can be changed. Once the San Marino City Council approves project alternatives (if we get to that point), those refinements will be submitted to Metro for their approval.

If approved by Metro, funding agreements will be submitted to the City Council for approval before work commences.

6. Residents are having their own conversations with South Pasadena regarding coordination, why isn't the administration?

City Response:

In 2017 City staff started discussions with neighboring San Gabriel Valley cities about alternative projects to the tunnel. South Pasadena at that time was conducting its own meetings with Metro and we were not included. Today, we have been getting community input on the original proposed projects and after those projects (original or refined) are approved in concept by the City Council, staff will begin to work with South Pasadena, Alhambra and the county. In the meantime, staff is monitoring the other Metro projects nearby San Marino.

7. Did the Council consider leveraging surrounding cities when it was coming up with proposals? Residents concerned that San Marino will become a funnel taking on overflow from other cities' projects.

City Response:

The city originally partnered with San Gabriel, Monterey Park, and Rosemead because Metro was negotiating with Alhambra and South Pasadena for the tunnel money. Staff believed that working together with other impacted agencies would prompt Metro to offer funds to us. (There was initial concern that South Pasadena and Alhambra would be the only two agencies to receive the funds once the 710 tunnel project was discontinued.)

8. What has staff decided to ask for in the second round? When are the revised proposals being submitted? What are final solutions going to be?

City Response:

The City is not at this time proposing second-round projects because Metro does not have second round funding available.

Revised proposals will be submitted to Metro if they are approved by the City Council, who has the final say of what the final solutions are.



Impact Questions:

9. Have analyses been considered for all of the proposed changes - economic, safety, pollution, financial, etc? Are the solutions taking into account air and noise concerns? If not, they should be a priority.

City Response:

The 710 tunnel project environmental impact report, which was approved by Metro, considered all the impacts of both the tunnel and non-tunnel alternatives. (Our projects would be non-tunnel alternatives.)

10. Why is the City now spending \$150k on a traffic study? Should the City be submitting proposals without having a full understanding of traffic patterns? If the City does have a full understanding, why are we spending money on a study?

City Response:

The citywide traffic circulation study originated with 2018/19 budget adoption, at direction from the City Council. It focuses on the City as a whole and will provide a big picture framework with which to evaluate individual projects.

11. What considerations are being taken regarding Waze and similar technology that diverts traffic onto side streets/local residential streets?

City Response:

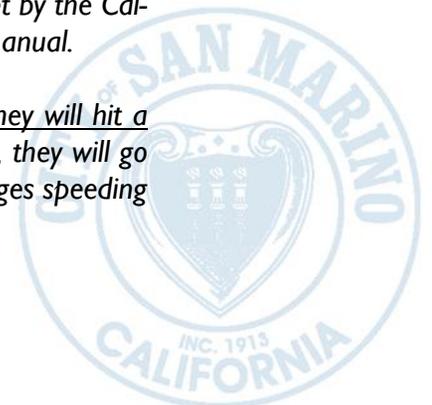
Unfortunately, solutions that directly block through-traffic (like Pasadena uses) cannot use the Metro funds. We are hopeful that the traffic circulation study (see above), if approved, would yield potential solutions which can be implemented and paid for from City funds.

12. Is there likely to be an increase in amount of speeding if all lights are synchronized?

City Response:

The timing for traffic signals along a corridor are required to be set at the posted speed limit (40 mph/25 mph at schools). Speed limits are justified by an engineering and traffic survey that follows standards set by the California Vehicle Code and California Traffic Control Devices Manual.

If a vehicle is traveling faster than the posted speed limit, they will hit a red light at each signal. If they follow the posted speed limit, they will go through town with minimal delay and stopping. This discourages speeding and improves safety.



13. Have the schools and their safety been considered when putting together the proposals?

City Response:

Yes. The previous Interim City Manager met with the former Superintendent for his input on projects, and our current City Engineer met again with district officials earlier this year about solving the traffic congestion and school safety problems at the school sites. As an example, the proposed work on Huntington in front of the high school and elementary/middle school is directly influenced by our collaboration.

14. How was the potential for increasing traffic which will impact the police and other services considered when putting together the proposals?

City Response:

Public safety staff participated in developing these plans. The proposals are focused on moving traffic through the City at safe speeds rather than increasing it. Staff will be assessing impacts that result from adjacent cities actions and plan for additional enforcement and/or maintenance if necessary.

15. Huntington Dr. isn't the only place that will be affected. The City needs to consider what Alhambra is going to do with their portion of the dollars and the impact it will have on San Marino.

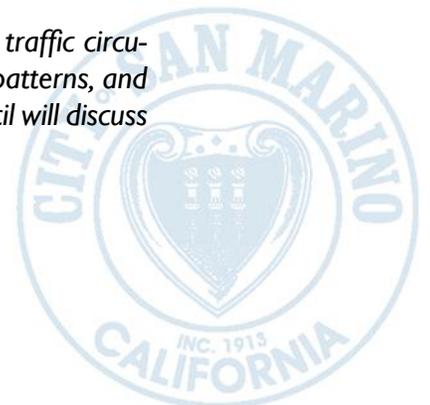
City Response:

Council and staff are aware of projects submitted by surrounding cities. Staff is ready to meet with Alhambra (or any other city that becomes relevant). If the City Council approves, San Marino would have the option of "holding" some of the funding until we are more aware of the impacts of other cities' projects and then implementing our project(s).

16. Staff should consider North-South and East-West traffic flow impacts as well. Streets surrounding any proposed project will be impacted and that needs to be considered.

City Response:

Agreed. Staff recommends moving forward with the citywide traffic circulation study to update decades-old information, model traffic patterns, and create a neighborhood traffic calming tool box. The City Council will discuss this at their June 28 Friday workshop.



Proposal Goal Questions:

17. Why is the City considering proposals that increase capacity over streets' allowance? Goals of proposals should be: safety, pedestrian-friendly, traffic reduction.

City Response:

Safety of pedestrians and the motoring public is A PRIORITY. The City proposals include a safety component and proposed work in front of the schools is safety-focused.

18. What is the City doing with the information it already has like the SCAG [Southern California Association of Governments] Report, Huntington Dr. Safety Study (February 2018)? The report calls for safety for pedestrians and bikes.

City Response:

Metro liaison Mr. Suetsugu and City staff used that report along with others prepared over the years in preparing our proposals. However, these current Metro Measure R/710 funds can only be used for "car" solutions, not pedestrian or bicycle solutions.

19. Why are proposals concentrated on Huntington Dr. when there are 5 other ways to access the surrounding highways without cutting through San Marino?

City Response:

The City only controls Huntington Drive, Sierra Madre Boulevard and some of San Gabriel Boulevard, and they are the routes that are eligible for Measure R funds in our community.

20. Metro's projects are only concerned with traffic flow, can our proposals be about safety?

City Response:

Yes. Our projects do focus on safety – speed control, school drop off/pick up areas, etc.

21. Have driveway needs been considered on Huntington Dr.?

City Response:

Staff is aware of driveways and will consider residents safety in developing the details of any plan.



22. Resident believes the goal of the proposals should be to impede the flow of traffic.

City Response:

Unfortunately, Measure R funds cannot be used to impede traffic.

23. Metro's goals are about increasing the volume of traffic, but why is the City considering this if that goal is not in line with City's priorities? How does San Marino benefit from the proposals?

City Response:

Metro's primary goals may not align with our primary goals, but we can still use the opportunity to make safety improvements at the schools, which is a huge benefit for San Marino residents. The City will save money by not having to make those improvements with City funds.

24. Los Robles is at full capacity - it is not safe for kids to bike on or even cross. Residents want a crosswalk.

City Response:

The City Engineer will forward this to the city's traffic engineer for analysis and follow up at a future Public Safety Commission meeting.

Metro Criteria Questions:

25. What strings are attached if San Marino accepts the Measure R dollars?

City Response:

If Metro is uncomfortable with a project we propose, they will simply deny funding up front before we begin.

Once a project is approved by both our City Council and Metro, our understanding from Metro is that there are three conditions: 1) The City has to design, construct and operate something that improves traffic flow, 2) We have to provide satisfactory documentation so we can be repaid for construction costs, 3) We have to ensure that state prevailing wage is paid to the construction workers (which is required on all government jobs).



26. Who at Metro communicated that no strings were attached if City takes the Metro dollars? Residents want clarification and confirmation in writing.

City Response:

Mr. Abdollah Ansari, Senior Executive Officer for program management of highways, provided the City with a written outline of what the projects have to be about to be eligible for funds. To summarize his message (copy attached), projects have to improve regional mobility in the 710 area.

27. Did staff or Metro choose to focus on Huntington Dr.? Why is it the focus?

City Response:

Staff chose Huntington Drive because the City controls it and there were many ideas in the SCAG report and school district requests that seemed to match what Metro is willing to fund.

28. Is the money only available for these 5 proposed projects? Can the City propose a new alternative?

City Response:

The money is available for the current five projects which may be modified as mentioned earlier.

29. What are Metro's criteria? Will they fund projects focused on safety? Why has it never been included in Metro's previous proposals?

City Response:

The main criteria for these funds is that the projects have to improve traffic flow. The City has included safety features as part of the projects, but any project explained to Metro as solely safety-focused will likely not gain approval. Staff submitted projects we believe include safety components for pedestrians and vehicles and looks forward to continuing to refine those solutions.



30. If San Marino gives Metro these projects, will they give the City something in return (i.e. pave roads for 5 years)? A 4th option needs to be considered that benefits San Marino citizens.

City Response:

These projects were submitted by the City, not directed by Metro. Metro is not pushing for us to complete these – or any – projects. As a result, it is unlikely that they would offer something “in return.”

Administrative Questions:

31. The City website is lacking the proposal documentation – can this be added? All proposals should be available to read – not just the 5 that are in consideration right now.

City Response:

The City has created a special web page to address 710-related issues. It may be found at <https://www.cityofsanmarino.org/1203/Measure-R-710>. The preliminary proposals are included on the website.

32. Can the website include all information residents need to make an informed decision? Residents request a URL be sent to them that directs them to this information and the 5 proposals.

City Response:

The City has created a special web page to address 710-related issues. It may be found at <https://www.cityofsanmarino.org/1203/Measure-R-710>. The preliminary proposals are included on the website and an email will be sent to all who provided their email addresses.

33. Resident requests more user-friendly materials that show the map of what Metro wants.

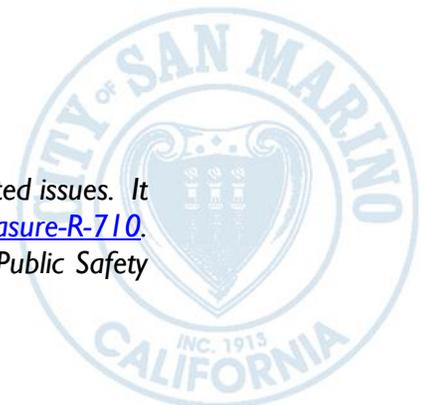
City Response:

The City has created a special web page to address 710-related issues. It may be found at <https://www.cityofsanmarino.org/1203/Measure-R-710>. The map is included on the website.

34. When do residents get answers to these questions?

City Response:

The City has created a special web page to address 710-related issues. It may be found at <https://www.cityofsanmarino.org/1203/Measure-R-710>. In addition, a the item will be heard again in public at the Public Safety



Commission meeting on Monday, June 24, at 7pm at San Marino Community Church.

35. Many residents work during the day and want to attend the City Council workshop. How can it be made accessible to residents and scheduled after work hours?

City Response:

The Public Safety Commission has been specially-scheduled at a time that should work for our working community members. The Mayor and City Manager will work together to determine what solution might be appropriate for the City Council meeting, currently scheduled for July 26.

36. The process has been very opaque, and residents are unclear on how projects were selected. There is general confusion on next steps and how final proposals will be decided.

City Response:

City staff, under the guidance of the City Council-appointed 710 resident advisor, worked to develop and submit the projects as "placeholder" solutions. Once funds were allocated by Metro, community engagement has been occurring to receive community input on the best ways to refine and placeholder projects.

The next step will be a July City Council workshop where the Council will discuss the three options they can choose from: approve the original projects, reject the funds entirely, or modify/refine the projects into ones that are acceptable to the community. Next steps from there will be determined by what option the City Council selects.

37. Resident concerned that the decision has already been made "behind closed doors."

City Response:

Absolutely no decision has been made because it has not been presented to the City Council for formal action yet. In addition, there have been six public meetings to date beginning last November at the Public Safety Commission or at Town Halls on this topic.



Technical Questions:

38. How can we decide if we want to invest in synchronized lights without understanding how it works? How does ATMS work?

City Response:

Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) is the technical term for signal synchronization. It works by getting data on speeds, volumes, and queuing from each signal and sending it to a master computer, which uses the data to modify the traffic signal timing to make it responsive to the real-time information.

39. Can we set signal coordination at lower speed (35, 40 mph) to help increase safety?

City Response:

Yes. The timing is set to match the speed limit determined by an engineering and traffic survey. The City Council can reduce that limit by up to 5 mph for special situations. Additionally the system can be set to the 25 mph school zone speed limit on school days.

40. Is it possible to align the City's objective of safety regarding the synchronized signals and the State's prevailing speed requirements?

City Response:

Yes. The speed limit is established by the State-required engineering and traffic study ("Radar Speed Survey"). The City Council can reduce that speed by up to 5 mph for safety considerations.

41. What is the life cycle cost of synchronization - maintenance, upgrades?

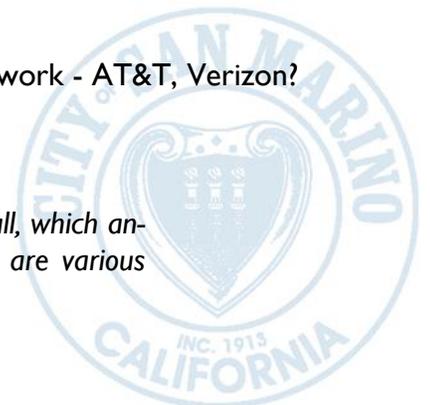
City Response:

Traffic signal control computers cost approximately \$25,000 each and last up to 15 years with good maintenance. The City currently spends about \$60,000 per year to maintain our 15 traffic signals. Upgrades are required for the computerized controls, regardless if the signals are synchronized or not.

42. How do coordinated lights work exactly? Do they run on a network - AT&T, Verizon?

City Response:

The signals communicate with a master computer at City Hall, which analyzes the data and adjusts each signal individually. There are various



types of communication networks to link the signals together including hard-wired, dedicated radio transmitters, or sending data through a cellular phone system (like your mobile phone does when you're not near wi-fi).

