

**Route 46 East Corridor Study
March 5, 2008
Community Workshop Summary**

Prepared by:



Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc
800 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94710

April 2008

Introduction

On March 5, 2008, approximately 50 Paso Robles residents and local agency representatives attended the Route 46 East Community Workshop at the City of Paso Robles Library Conference Center. The meeting provided residents an opportunity to discuss transportation issues within the five mile study corridor and to hear directly from Caltrans and other Study Team agency staff.

The meeting, the first of three, was hosted by agencies collaborating on the Route 46 East Comprehensive Corridor Study, including Caltrans, San Luis Obispo County and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. While not currently a formal partner on the Study Team, the City of Paso Robles is a key stakeholder that has participated in the formative stages of the process. Planning assistance was provided by MIG, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in city planning, design, communications and technology services.

The meeting began with brief welcoming remarks from Study Team representatives, followed by an open session where residents could bring up any ideas, issues or concerns they had about the corridor. Larry Newland, Caltrans project manager, then presented the purpose, goals and status of the Comprehensive Corridor Study. Larry explained that Caltrans is seeking public input to identify problems in the Corridor and evaluate solutions. Following the large group discussion, participants continued the discussion in small groups where they answered three questions:

- Which of the corridor goals is most important to you, and why?
- Where are your specific concerns in the corridor?
- Where are there opportunities to improve the corridor?

The key points of the discussion were summarized and recorded in a closing presentation.

Large Group Discussion

Carolyn Verheyen of MIG facilitated a large group discussion about current conditions in the corridor. Carolyn explained that the conversation was an opportunity to share what is and is not working in the corridor, and there were no “right answers.” Paul Rosenbloom of MIG graphically recorded participants’ comments. A copy of the record is included in the report as Figure 1.

“Safety” was a concern for many participants, as was the health of local businesses. Other issues that participants mentioned included “lighting,” “truck traffic,” and “truck parking.” Specific safety concerns are listed in figure 1. Participants stressed that they believe congestion problems are primarily due to “interregional traffic.”

Many people expressed their desire that corridor improvement efforts be designed to reinforce and “enhance” the small town image of Paso Robles, including creating a “gateway” so motorists knew that they were entering the city. Residents also encouraged the

project team to take a “comprehensive” approach to the Corridor Study, examining a “range of options” including “transit” and “interim improvements.”

Small Group Discussion

The small groups provided participants an opportunity to discuss corridor issues in greater detail, and the themes that emerged were similar to those from the large group discussion. In addition to general discussion, participants were able to use a map of the corridor study area to point out specific concerns or improvement suggestions, included in Figure 2.

Which of the corridor goals is most important to you, and why?

Participants were asked to review the corridor goals established by the Study Team and identify the two goals that should receive the highest priority. Overall, “increasing safety and efficiency” and “separating local, regional and interregional traffic” were given the highest priority by participants.

Where are your specific concerns in the corridor?

Participants identified the following top issues:

- Safety
- Protecting business
- Connectivity
- Level of service/traffic flow
- Aesthetics/gateway
- Maintaining the character of Paso Robles

As in the large group, stakeholders were very concerned about safety, and this issue was one of their highest priorities. The intersection with Airport Road was singled out as particularly dangerous.

Besides safety, protecting business was an important priority. Participants believed that corridor improvements could offer benefits to local businesses if they were done right, but could have the opposite effect if done wrong. Protecting Paso Robles’ rural aesthetic and quality of life were very important goals for many participants who expressed a desire that any design solution be in keeping with current community character. Many people believed that a six-lane highway was not appropriate for Paso Robles.

Where are there opportunities to improve the corridor?

Top priorities for improvements included the following intersections:

- On/off ramps for SR 101
- Golden Hill
- Airport Road

Participants also emphasized that a phased approach could be useful, and that it was important to keep property owners informed of any developments. Many people believed it was important to make improvements immediately, and ideas for improvements included:

- Adding battery backup power for lights
- Improving landscape maintenance
- Improving signage

Summary and Next Steps

Project staff will use the information collected at this meeting to refine the project goals and consider technically feasible solutions. The next public workshop is scheduled for May 29th, 2008. Interested stakeholders can stay informed by visiting the project website, www.46eastforthefuture.org, or contacting Larry Newland, Project Manager, at (805) 549-3103 or larry_newland@dot.ca.gov.



ISSUES

AIRPORT RD

BUENA VISTA

NO PROBLEM EXCEPT 3-6PM FRIDAY

OPPORTUNITIES

RIGHT OF WAY

- ▣ SOUTHBOUND DELAY
- ▣ SOUTHERN CONNECTION
- ▣ GOLDEN HILL/AIRPORT INTERSECTION

▣ INCREASE/IMPROVE IMAGE → GATEWAY

▣ INTERREGIONAL TRAFFIC

▣ SAFETY → SPEED! → ACCESS!

GOLDEN HILL

PROP 1B \$

▣ WEEKEND DELAY 46/101

▣ NEED RT ON 46 EB

→ WIDENING?

▣ LIGHTING

▣ DELAY TO UNION

→ OTHER TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS

▣ \$ IMPACT TO LOCAL BIZ

▣ KEY INTERSECTION

→ CONSIDER A RANGE OF OPTIONS

▣ INTERIM IMPROVEMENTS

▣ TRUCK TRAFFIC

▣ FUNDING

▣ IMPROVE 46 INTERSECTION

▣ 101/46 INTERSECTION

▣ IMPACT OF INCREASED TRAFFIC

▣ OTHER TRANSIT OPTIONS

▣ TRUCKS PARKING

▣ FOCUS ON FUNCTION

FIGURE 1. LARGE GROUP COMMENTS

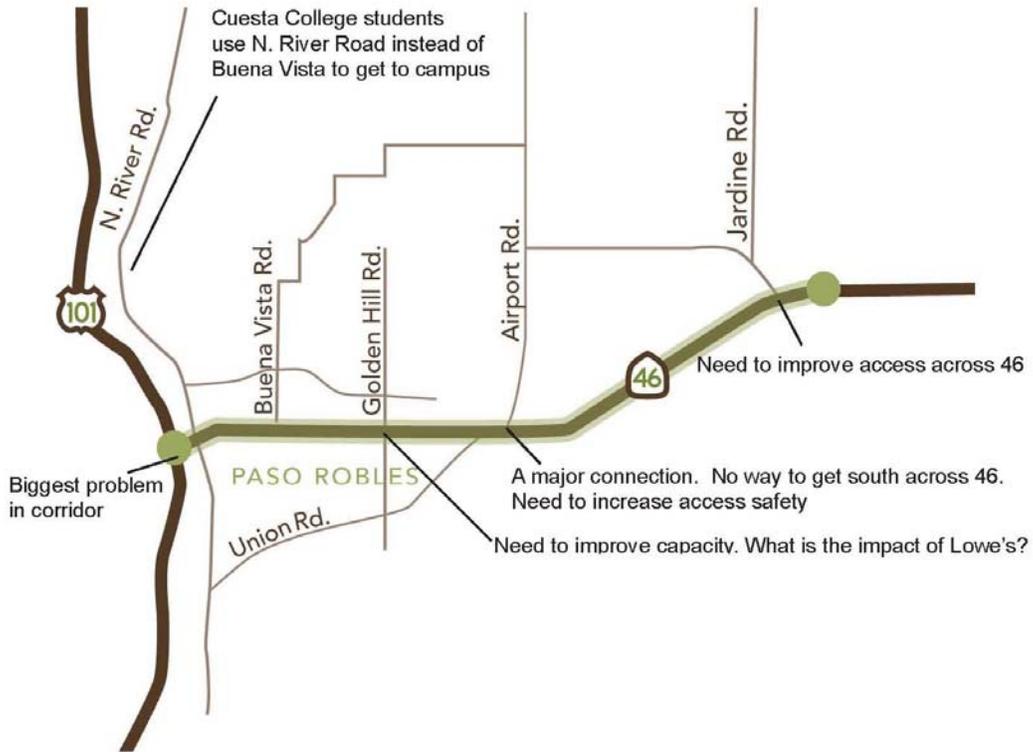


FIGURE 2: Small group participant comments from March 5 workshop