



# CITY OF CARSON

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Workshop: April 8, 2008  
 SUBJECT: Alameda Street Sound-wall and Noise Mitigation  
 Workshop

APPLICANT: City of Carson

REQUEST: Workshop to discuss sound-wall design and noise mitigation alternatives for train and diesel truck noise along Alameda Street between Dominguez Street and Freeway 405

PROPERTY INVOLVED: Light-industrial zoned properties and residences east of Alameda Street between Dominguez Street and 405 Freeway to the Harbor View Avenue alignment

### COMMISSION ACTION

- Concurred with staff
- Did not concur with staff
- Other

### COMMISSIONERS' VOTE

AYE	NO		AYE	NO	
		Chairman Faletogo			Graber
		Vice-Chair Hudson			Saenz
		Cannon			Verrett

## I. Introduction

The purpose of this workshop is to discuss sound-wall design and noise attenuation alternatives to mitigate diesel truck and train noise along Alameda Street (Alameda Corridor) between Dominguez Street and the San Diego 405 Freeway to the Harbor View Avenue alignment.

## II. Background

The Alameda Corridor is the primary rail access and a significant truck route to and from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The Alameda Corridor is located in southern Los Angeles County, California, running from the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles 20 miles north to downtown Los Angeles, primarily along and adjacent to Alameda Street. The project extends through or borders the cities of Vernon, Huntington Park, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, Carson, Los Angeles, and the County of Los Angeles. In 1989, the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority was created to have design and construction responsibility for the Alameda Corridor. The Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA) and cities along the corridor have made significant improvements along the length of the route to reduce delays, increase safety and lessen the impact of traffic on the adjoining neighborhoods.

The 1993 Alameda Corridor EIR/EIS identified that train noise levels in the subject location met Cal-Trans "Noise Abatement Criteria" of 67 dBA decibels exterior noise levels near residences. This EIR/EIS further identified a sound-wall location in the subject area to mitigate identified excessive noise levels. The existing noise impact from the Alameda Corridor on the adjacent residents within the Dominguez neighborhood area is significant. Trains couple and idle at the Dominguez Yard and along the nearby rail lines creating loud noises. Noise levels are expected to increase as a result of increased volume of truck traffic associated with the completion of the proposed SR-47 Expressway and Schuyler Heim Bridge road and bridge improvements and other rail and transportation related projects near the ports.

Over the past 20 years, the residential community has expressed a desire for a sound wall to lessen the noise generated by the train and anticipated increased truck traffic. Both ACTA and the City of Carson acknowledged the need for a sound wall. Numerous discussions and community meetings have discussed alternatives but no final plans were developed due to difficulties in identifying an appropriate location, design and funding.

On May 2, 2006, the Carson City Council and Redevelopment Agency directed staff to retain a consultant through a Request for Proposal process to conduct the studies required to implement a sound barrier. Such studies would include alternative feasibilities analysis and preliminary designs to study and mitigate loud noise.

On June 5, 2007, staff retained Tetra Tech, an engineering/planning firm to prepare the Alameda "Sound-wall Feasibility Study". Tetra Tech completed the feasibility study in March of 2008, and identified four alternatives. The four alternatives are summarized as follows:



1. Alternative 1 is a 14 foot high masonry wall constructed at grade on the west side (business side) of the alley in properties currently occupied with industrial and commercial structures. Acquisition of private property is required between Dominguez and Carson Streets. The wall would be continuous with no breaks and would close access to side streets between Dominguez and Carson Streets.
2. Alternative 2 is a 6 foot high landscaped berm with an 8 foot high masonry wall erected atop of the berm. Acquisition of properties and street closure would also apply to this alternative.
3. Alternative 3 utilizes existing 2 story buildings as sound barriers and connects new sound-walls between the existing buildings. This alternative would require acquisition of land requiring sound-walls and does not propose side street closure.
4. Alternative 4a/b proposes a continuous 14 foot sound-wall on the east side of the alley. It would require widening the existing 15 foot alley to 26 feet and acquisition of residences east of the alley. Side street closure would also be required.

On April 3, 2008, staff in coordination with the Dominguez Area Property Owner's Association held a community meeting to discuss sound-wall design alternatives. The staff shared information regarding the potential need to acquire residential or industrial properties in order to obtain an appropriate location to place a sound wall. The community was also advised that all of the options would be subject to identifying and receiving adequate funding to complete the project.

The area south of Carson Street east of Alameda to the 405 Freeway while not addressed through the Tetra Tech study was evaluated under separate agreement. The noise study for this area found noise readings exceeding Cal-Trans "Noise Abatement Criteria". However, a sound-wall may not be the best approach to mitigate excessive noise levels in this area since constructing the wall may require closing 218<sup>th</sup> Place, the main point of vehicular access to this residential area. Staff will hold a separate community meeting with residents in this area and discuss alternative noise mitigation such as residential sound insulation programs.

### III. Analysis

Staff has completed its evaluation of the sound-wall feasibility study and has also evaluated other noise mitigation alternatives. Other alternatives evaluated include: various street closure designs (cul de sac or hammer head turn-arounds); economic development opportunities for commercial/industrial properties by adding parking via alley widening; and a sound insulation program (similar to airport mitigation program used in the City of Inglewood) that retrofits residences with windows, walls, doors, and ceiling through increased insulation treatments. Additionally the residences air/heating systems may also require retrofit and or replacement to gain full benefit of structure insulation upgrade.

The 1993 Alameda Corridor EIR/EIS identified a sound-wall location in the Dominguez area to mitigate identified excessive noise levels. With the addition of new projects that increase rail and truck activities along the Alameda Corridor, the noise levels are expected to increase. The noise studies of the Tetra Tech sound-



wall feasibility study re-affirm previous noise studies in this area. Therefore, staff is presenting to the Planning Commission, Tetra Tech's Sound-wall Feasibility Study, and other potential noise mitigation alternatives to obtain comments that may assist in providing the best sound-wall/noise mitigation alternative to improve the subject area resident's health and quality of life.

Information obtained from this meeting will be utilized to refine the noise mitigation alternatives. There is a need to identify a preferred alternative so that projected costs can be determined. Additionally, if the preferred alternative requires acquisition of property, the City Council and Redevelopment Agency would need to determine a willingness to assist with the purchase and eminent domain proceedings. Staff is currently working with ACTA to identify potential funding sources and will continue to do outreach with ACTA, Cal-Trans and other key stakeholders.

#### IV. Recommendation


That the Planning Commission:

- **REVIEW** and **PROVIDE** comments and direction to determine a preferred noise mitigation alternative for the Dominguez area.


#### V. Exhibits

1. Tetra Tech's Sound-wall Feasibility Study

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