



NEWS RELEASE

Date: Thursday, July 7, 2011
District: District 11 - San Diego and Imperial Counties
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Caltrans and FHWA Identify Express Lanes Only Option as Locally Preferred Alternative for I-5 Express Lanes Project

Alternative offers appropriate balance of benefits and costs to the environment and community

SAN DIEGO (July 7, 2011) – After extensive public outreach and consideration of input from the community, resource agencies and key leaders, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) identified the Express Lanes Only (8+4 with Buffer/Striping) option as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Interstate 5 (I-5) Express Lanes Project.

“When combined with the rail and environmental improvements planned along the corridor, the Locally Preferred Alternative offers the appropriate balance of benefits and costs to the environment and community,” said Caltrans’ I-5 Corridor Director Allan Kosup. “This alternative will improve the quality of life for I-5 travelers by offering new transportation solutions for the future and help to reduce travel times and congestion on the highway.”

The Locally Preferred Alternative adds two Express Lanes to the highway in each direction between La Jolla Village Drive in San Diego and Harbor Drive in Oceanside, separated from the existing general purpose lanes by a painted, striped buffer. The new Express Lanes will accommodate carpools, vanpools and single occupancy vehicles using FasTrak®, ensure reliable travel times along the corridor and improve the movement of goods and services on the I-5 and beyond.

Of the build alternatives studied in the project’s Draft Environmental Impact Report, all were a significant improvement over the existing condition. Caltrans and the FHWA determined that the Locally Preferred Alternative best meets the purpose and need of the project; has the smallest footprint and least impacts to natural resources; requires the fewest property relocations; and has the lowest construction costs (estimated at \$3.5 billion).

The I-5 Express Lanes Project is part of a comprehensive program of highway, rail, environmental and mobility enhancements along the North Coast Corridor (NCC), which stretches 27 miles along San Diego’s coastline, crosses six lagoons and connects the cities of Oceanside, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Solana Beach, Del Mar and San Diego.

The Locally Preferred Alternative includes a proposed Direct Access Ramp (DAR) at Voigt Drive and Manchester Avenue, providing direct access to the Express Lanes. The decision of the DARs at Oceanside Boulevard and Cannon Road has been deferred and the scale of the proposed DAR at Manchester Avenue has been significantly reduced.



Additionally, the Locally Preferred Alternative is consistent with Senate Bill 468, assuring balanced transit and highway solutions.

The NCC Program is comprised of three primary focus areas – the I-5 Express Lanes Project, coastal rail and transit enhancements, and environmental protection and coast access improvements. Improvements proposed for the NCC represent several billion dollars in investment for the San Diego economy over the next few decades.

Caltrans anticipates the release of a comprehensive coastal protection plan for the project in early 2012. The final environmental report for the project is expected in late 2012. Work to construct Phase 1 of the project – which will extend High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes, one in each direction, from Manchester Avenue to State Route 78 – will begin in 2013.

For more information about the I-5 Express Lanes Project or other components of the North Coast Corridor Program, please visit KeepSanDiegoMoving.com.

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