

I-5 North Coast Courier

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Message from the Director: Strong Freeway Drives San Diego's Economy

The I-5 North Coast Corridor from Oceanside to La Jolla is used by millions of vehicles each day and moves billions of dollars in goods movement each year, making it crucial to the health of southern California's economy.

We at Caltrans are working to keep this corridor functioning into the future by planning improvements that will relieve congestion and improve commute times. Together, these improvements will help people get to and from work and strengthen California's ability to conduct trade with its top trading partner, Mexico. Annually, Mexico brings billions of dollars into the California economy and California exports approximately \$17.7 billion worth of goods to Mexico.

Keeping the I-5 North Coast Corridor strong also helps our economy through business generated by tourism. On its own, Carlsbad's beach has more than 4.6 million visitors annually. Other beach cities along the I-5 North Coast Corridor such as Oceanside, Encinitas, and Del Mar also host millions of beach visitors a year. Additionally, Mexican tourists spend \$1.5 billion annually in California.

The efficiency of this corridor also affects everyday life for San Diegans who live or work in this area. The corridor transverses five coastal cities, the northern area of the City of San Diego, six lagoons, a major military installation to the north, and employment centers to the south. Currently, 521,568 people live along this corridor. By 2030, that number is projected to grow to 635,678. Similarly, jobs are projected to grow within this area from 388,909 now to 424,6245 by 2030.

We are working hard so that you can be confident that the project's improvements - such as managed lanes, more freeway lanes, and additional auxiliary lanes - will help address the future needs of our economy and community.



Typical day on I-5 North Coast Corridor: trucking and commuting uses to support economy

I-5 Progress in Motion Lomas Auxiliary Lanes and I-5/Lomas Santa Fe Drive Interchange

Commuters on I-5 can expect congestion relief with two construction projects that will help eliminate a traffic bottleneck near Via de la Valle.

Construction has begun on a project that will provide an auxiliary lane in each direction along I-5 from Via de la Valle to Lomas Santa Fe Drive. An auxiliary lane starts at an on-ramp and ends at the next off-ramp and provides a longer distance for drivers to merge on and off the freeway. This project will take about six months to complete.



Shortly after the auxiliary lane is completed, work will begin to extend the existing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane from Via de la Valle to just south of Manchester Avenue. This HOV lane extension is expected to bring significant congestion relief by allowing HOV users to continue on I-5 past the Via de la Valle exit.

The project will also revise the Lomas Santa Fe Drive Interchange in Solana Beach by building two new loop-style on-ramps. These new on ramps will make the entire interchange flow more smoothly by allowing motorists to access the freeway or drive past the freeway depending on their route. The work will take about two years to complete.

"This project will be the first work funded by the TransNet on I-5," said Project Director Allan Kosup. "It will also be the first construction project in San Diego to use the new bond funds approved by voters in November."

Caltrans has identified the work as one of the five competing projects in San Diego to receive funding allotted from Governor Schwarzeneggers's Strategic Growth Plan, passed by voters in November 2006. The transportation segment of the plan authorizes \$19.9 billion of funding through general obligation bonds to reduce congestion and make other transportation improvements throughout the state.

For more information on the HOV lane extension and interchange work, visit KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/I-5.html or call Caltrans at 619.688.6670.

Tuning in on Noise Studies

As more and more drivers use the I-5 North Coast Corridor, it is no surprise that highway noise is increasing. Noise abatement through sound walls, sound berms, or other means continues to be one of the most asked about issues of this Project.

Traffic noise studies, required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), take a variety of environmental factors into consideration including existing and planned land use development, construction noise, peak periods of traffic noise, school proximities, biological resources, cost, and more. The process considers projected noise levels along the project area, determines if a sound wall or other barrier could reduce the noise, then examines the cost and potential impacts of noise abatement to determine location. In some cases, a wall is possible but creates more impacts than benefits, or costs more than federal policies allow to be spent on soundwalls.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will release the results of the noise studies when the Draft Environmental Impact Report for this project is ready for public review. When the Draft EIR is completed, public meetings will be held along the corridor so that attendees can view potential placement of future sound walls in their area. During these public meetings, representatives from Caltrans, SANDAG and design consultants will be available to discuss the project with area residents.



When the Draft EIR that studies noise is complete, it will be available for public review

Notification of the meetings will be announced in local newspapers, mailed to area residents, posted at community facilities, and available on the project website at KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/I-5.html. If you would like to be notified through e-mail of the meeting schedules, please send a request to TransNetProjects@pbsj.com. For more information regarding noise abatement policies, see:

www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/noise/index.htm

www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/index.htm

We hope to see you at a community meeting!

Making History with the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA)

For the first time in the history of California, bond money from the state's general fund rather than the state highway account will be used to fund improvements to the State's transportation system. The Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) will provide approximately \$4.5 billion in funding to reduce congestion, enhance mobility, improve safety, and promote stronger connectivity along key corridors throughout the state.

Voters approved the Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond of 2006 as Proposition 1B on November 7, 2006. To determine the projects to receive portions of this funding, Caltrans submitted nominations, including the I-5 North Coast Corridor, to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for review in January 2007.



View of La Jolla Village Drive and I-5 when first built fifty years ago.

In late February, the CTC approved \$82 million in CMIA funds for the I-5 corridor for a project to extend the existing HOV lane south on I-805 to Carroll Canyon Road and north on I-5 to Manchester Avenue.

"Due to the large project area of the I-5 North Coast, CMIA funding will provide an additional funding source to help relieve congestion on I-5 now that it has been approved," said Corridor Director Allan Kosup. The CMIA funds will be added to the existing federal and TransNet funds already committed to the corridor.

The CTC only approved CMIA funding for projects that enhance mobility in a highly congested corridor and benefit all regions of California. Construction for the projects must begin by December 31, 2012, and must improve access to jobs, housing, markets, and commerce.

The first part of the HOV extension work is expected to begin in fall 2007 and extend the existing I-5 HOV lane north to Manchester Avenue. Construction of the project to extend the HOV lane south on I-805 to Carroll Canyon Road is expected to begin in summer 2010. The CMIA funding will complete an eight-mile HOV lane.



Photo of the I-5 ground-breaking held in 1957 at the Vista Way Bridge, currently known as SR 78.

Traffic Tools at Your Fingertips! KeepSanDiegoMoving.com and 511

San Diego residents, visitors and businesses know it can be a challenge to stay updated on the many freeway transportation projects underway in San Diego County. To help keep the public informed, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), in coordination with Caltrans, launched KeepSanDiegoMoving.com in Summer 2006. This website includes a wealth of information on current and future freeway improvement projects including I-5, I-15, I-805, SR 76, SR 52, and the Mid-Coast transit project.

KeepSanDiegoMoving.com was funded through the TransNet half-cent sales tax, which will generate an additional \$14 billion for transportation improvements including public transit, various freeway corridors and local streets and roadways. Another exciting traffic tool is 511, a free phone, web, and broadcast TV service that provides up-to-date information about traffic, transit and other travel conditions. Simply dial 5-1-1 from your phone or visit www.511sd.com for current traffic information, whenever you need it!

To find community facilities with Internet access, contact your local neighborhood services or call Caltrans at 619.688.6670.



www.keepersandiegomoving.com



www.511sd.com



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