

The I-5 North Coast Corridor Express Lanes Project Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

The Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FEIR/EIS) completes the planning process for the highway component of the North Coast Corridor Program

On November 1, 2013, the FEIR/EIS will be made available for the public by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration. The release of the FEIR/EIS finalizes the environmental review process and moves the project closer to the start of construction in 2015 on HOV lanes from Lomas Santa Fe Drive to State Route 78.

Certifies the Express Lanes Only Option as the Preferred Alternative

The FEIR/EIS certifies the 8+4 with buffer option as the preferred alternative for the project which will add two Express Lanes in each direction on I-5 from La Jolla Village Drive in San Diego to Harbor Drive in Oceanside. The preferred alternative has the smallest footprint of all the build alternatives studied in the Draft EIR/EIS, resulting in the fewest right-of-way and environmental impacts.

Addresses the Highway Needs of Today and Provides Flexible Solution for the Future

As one of only two north-south corridors in northern San Diego County, the I-5 North Coast Corridor – a 27-mile span from La Jolla to Oceanside – serves more than 700,000 daily trips, including commuters, goods movement, local trips, visitors and recreation users. The I-5 project is needed to address existing traffic congestion and provide flexibility to adapt to changes in travel demands.



The I-5 Express Lanes Project will add two Express Lanes in each direction from La Jolla Village Drive in San Diego to Harbor Drive in Oceanside.

What's New in the Final EIR/EIS?

The I-5 Express Lanes Final EIR/EIS has been revised and finalized based on public comment. Some important changes from the draft include:

- Affirms the 8+4 with buffer option as the preferred alternative, the smallest footprint of all the previously studied build alternatives;
- Eliminates previously planned Direct Access Ramps at Oceanside Boulevard and Cannon Road;
- Redesigned Manchester Avenue Direct Access Ramp from an overpass to an underpass to minimize project footprint and visual effects;
- Confirms the projects included in the Resource Enhancement Mitigation Program which will protect, restore and enhance natural habitat at several locations in the North Coast Corridor;
- Caltrans concluded that by lengthening the highway bridges over the San Elijo, Batiquitos and Buena Vista lagoons, tidal flow and the overall health at each of those lagoons could be improved;
- Incorporates North Coast Corridor design guidelines so projects are consistent with community character and local aesthetics;
- Inclusion of the 27-mile North Coast Bike Trail, which closes gaps in the existing bike trail network and will complete a continuous trail from La Jolla to Oceanside adjacent to I-5; and
- Addresses California Senate Bill 468, which focuses on project phasing and coordination to minimize impacts to the environment and community during construction.



A Project of The North Coast Corridor

Express Lanes a congestion-free option for travelers. Additionally, as new transit options such as Bus Rapid Transit become available to corridor, the Express Lanes can be managed to allow transit vehicles, carpools and solo drivers using FasTrak®. Revenue generated from FasTrak® will be utilized to fund future transit projects in the corridor.

Incorporates Public Input and Community Feedback for a Collaborative Process

The FEIR/EIS includes responses to over 5,000 comments received from community members, public agencies and various stakeholders during the Draft EIR/EIS review period. Following the circulation of the Draft EIR/EIS, Caltrans re-evaluated project design features in response to public comments. A few of the design refinements can be found on the front page of this fact sheet.

Finalizes Plans for the Highway Component of the North Coast Corridor Program

The I-5 Express Lanes Project is part of the \$6.5 billion NCC Program, which includes highway, rail, transit, environmental protection and coastal access improvements. The Program provides a balanced transportation system to create more choices for travelers while enhancing the quality of life for residents.

The FEIR/EIS includes key additions such as the NCC Design Guidelines and the North Coast Bike Trail for a comprehensive solution to address transportation design and community enhancement features. These features are part of an effort to enhance coastal access and develop improvement projects that are consistent with community character.

Restoring and Enhancing Sensitive Coastal Habitat

The FEIR/EIS includes the preliminary approval for the \$170 million Resource Enhancement Mitigation Program (REMP). The REMP has been established to provide a package of natural resource restoration, protection and preservation opportunities. Preserving and enhancing coastal habitat is a top priority for Caltrans and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) as highway, rail and transit improvement projects are implemented.



Interstate 5 in the North County traverses six coastal lagoons including the Agua Hedionda Lagoon shown above.

Timeline/Next Steps

Below is a snapshot of the features that will be constructed during phase 1 (2015-2018) of the I-5 Express Lanes Project. These features are fully funded through construction. For a complete list of projects during phase 1, please visit KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/NCC.

- Add one HOV lane in each direction from Lomas Santa Fe Drive to State Route 78 (SR 78).
- Replace and lengthen the highway bridges at the San Elijo and Batiquitos lagoons.
- Construct soundwalls from Lomas Santa Fe Drive to SR 78.
- Construct the Lomas Santa Fe Drive to Cannon Road segment of the 27-mile North Coast Bike Trail.