

Interchange



Approved!

State Transportation Commission Awards \$247 Million for Interstate 5 Improvements in Northern L.A. County

Compiled from Interchange staff and news releases from Caltrans and Metro

The state has approved \$2.7 billion in project funding that includes \$247 million for the next phase of the Interstate 5 North

Los Angeles County Capacity Enhancement Project, clearing the way for the highly anticipated addition of toll-free carpool lanes in northern Los Angeles County.

The decision by the California Transportation Commission was hailed by Golden State Gateway Coalition leaders as a major step forward for the coalition's top-priority project.

"This is a major step in moving this much-needed project forward," said Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition. "We're very pleased that the California Transportation Commission agreed that the project should be among the state's top priorities for highway construction funding."

The \$539.2 million I-5 (Golden State Freeway) Chokepoint Relief Project will add truck lanes, HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, sound walls, and an ITS hub station. It will also widen seven bridges and improve access to the California Highway Patrol's weigh station near the junction of I-5 and State Route 126.

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\$47 Million Federal (INFRA) Grant Awarded to I-5 Project Improvements

Source: News release from Rep. Steve Knight

Rep. Steve Knight (R-CA) announced after a conversation with U.S. Transportation

Secretary Elaine Chao that the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) will receive a \$47 million Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA)

grant to relieve the traffic congestion in Santa Clarita on the I-5.

"Santa Clarita and the entire region will benefit enormously
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www.goldenstategateway.org
Phone: 661.775.0455
Fax: 661.295.0692
28042 Avenue Stanford, Unit E
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

From the **Executive Director**

I Also Don't Like Paying Taxes

By **Victor Lindenheim**

*Executive Director,
Golden State Gateway Coalition*

There's a new "gas tax" in California — for the first time in 28 years.

I don't like paying taxes. But, I dislike unsafe, crowded roads and crumbling, rusting bridges even more. In fact, the collapse of the poorly maintained Mianus River Bridge on Interstate 95 in Connecticut — killing three people and seriously injuring three more — happened when I lived there some years ago. Certainly made an impression on me.

So, the question on the "gas tax" really should be: what is this going to cost me (very little, actually) and what will I get (a whole lot, actually). Let's do the math. The state-mandated gas tax will cost us 12 cents a gallon. And, let's say you drive 10,000 miles a year and you get 20 miles per gallon on your 2014 Ford Fjord Tracker. That's \$60 a year — or five bucks a month.

So what do you, a dutifully tax-paying citizen of the Santa Clarita Valley and a California motorist get for your five bucks a month? For starters, \$247 million toward construction of toll-free carpool lanes on Interstate 5. And, as of June 5, a \$47 million federal grant for improvements to I-5.

Want to take the train? You get \$8.9 million for a brand new Metrolink station in our community. You say that the Antelope Valley Freeway is your road of choice for your commute? How about \$3.5 million for a pave-



Victor Lindenheim

ment rehabilitation project there? And what's in it for the City of Santa Clarita for improving and maintaining local roads? \$64,421,000 over 10 years. Then, there will also be multiple opportunities to apply for millions of dollars more through competitive grant programs funded by the "gas tax."

My point is, it's easy to take a default anti-tax position, because we don't like to pay taxes. On the other hand, we recognize that there are essential services and infrastructure that are provided and paid for with our tax dollars: police and fire protection, education, water supply, wastewater treatment, and yes, roads and bridges and public transportation.

The need to fix California's roads is apparent to anyone who drives a motor vehicle in our state, or has ever been a passenger in one. We now have a funding plan in place to make some real progress in addressing the problem. And, if there is a viable alternative, I haven't seen it. There really is no "Plan B."

The revenue collected will, by law (ACA5/Prop. 69) be invested only in transportation-related projects and services — 65 percent on highways and 20 percent on public transportation. We get safer roads, improved mobility, enhanced goods move-

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ment and cleaner air. And thousands of good-paying jobs will be created. Thousands of them.

So, although I'm not a fan of paying taxes, I support this one. It's a good deal for the Santa Clarita Valley, Los Angeles County and the State of California.

Pavement Project Requires Summer On-Ramp Closure

News Release from Caltrans

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) advises motorists that construction activity will close, for up to three months,

one of two on-ramps to southbound Interstate 5 (Golden State Freeway) near Hasley Canyon Road in the community of Castaic in northern Los Angeles County.

Beginning May 18, the southbound on-ramp at Sedona Way closed and is expected to remain closed continuously until approximately mid-August while new pavement is construct-

ed where the ramp enters the freeway.

Instead, drivers may use a second on-ramp to southbound I-5 at Hasley Canyon Road, located 0.2 mile south

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The Interstate 5 pavement rehabilitation project is making progress toward its 2019 completion. Shown in these photos: Newly repaved lanes nearing completion near Calgrove Boulevard. *Photos courtesy of Caltrans*

I-5 Pavement Project on Track for 2019

SANTA CLARITA — The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) removed a temporary “bypass” lane on northbound Interstate 5 between Valencia Boulevard and State Route 126 where the I-5 pavement construction project is underway in and near the city of Santa Clarita.

In addition, a new bypass lane on the northbound side of I-5 opened June 8. It starts near Pico Canyon Road/Lyons Avenue and continues to Valencia Boulevard in Santa Clarita.

The northbound bypass or “crossover” lane shifts traffic to an area that normally is the inner shoulder of the southbound side of the freeway. Temporary lane configurations are in use during the two-year, \$171 million project that is replacing concrete pavement on 16 miles of I-5

Signs are posted to alert drivers to the new lane configuration. Drivers are urged to allow extra travel time, be aware of the new lane pattern and observe the 55 mph speed limit in the construction zone.

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SB1

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The CTC’s decision also included funding for other highly anticipated transportation projects in north Los Angeles County, including a new Metrolink station in Santa Clarita.

The competitive grants, to be funded through the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (SB 1) were awarded to 64 projects throughout California to tackle congestion, support valuable trade corridors and bolster local agency efforts to invest in transportation. These three programs — the Solutions for Congested Corridors, Trade Corridor Enhancement and Local Partnership Programs — are vital infrastructure improvement programs created by SB 1.

“California is expected to keep growing, both economically and in population,” said Caltrans Director Laurie Berman. “These projects funded by SB 1 will help to ensure that we can keep our economy moving and growing, and ease commutes for our residents so they can move efficiently between destinations.”

The CTC approved the grants for these three competitive grants during their May commission meeting in San Diego.

Local Partnership Competitive Program

The CTC awarded approximately \$309 million to 27 projects to fund transportation improvements valued at more than \$1.7 billion. This funding represents three years (fiscal



Gov. Jerry Brown spoke about the importance of SB1 and its role in rebuilding California’s infrastructure in May at a Mobility 21 workshop at Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles. Photo: L.A. Metro

years 2017-20) of matching funds for local entities that have already chosen to make their own investments in transportation.

The Local Partnership Program (LPP) was created by SB 1 to provide counties, cities and regional transportation agencies that have passed sales tax measures, developer fees or other voter-approved transportation fees with addi-

tional support for local projects from the state. The LPP creates a continuous appropriation of \$200 million annually to fund road maintenance and rehabilitation, sound walls and other transportation improvement projects. These funds are distributed through a 50 percent statewide competitive component and a 50 percent formula component. The recipients of the

formulaic component were finalized in March.

Local projects receiving funding include:

- **The Vista Canyon Metrolink Station Project (\$8.9 million grant):** This \$28.2 million project will construct a new Metrolink Station in the city of Santa Clarita, adding new railroad track; signal improvements; drainage improvements; a 25,000-square-foot center platform; grade-separated pedestrian access; construct a new parallel rail track and rail bridge; and new rail signal.

The final approved project list, by county, for the Local Partnership Program Competitive Program can be found at http://catc.ca.gov/programs/sb1/lpp/docs/2018_Adopted_CompetitiveLPP.pdf.

Solutions for Congested Corridors Program

SB 1 created the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program, which provides \$250 million annually for multimodal corridor plans that make performance improvements along the state’s busiest highways. Approved projects and plans provide more transportation choices while preserving the character of local communities and creating opportunities for neighborhood enhancement projects.

The CTC approved four years’ worth of funding (Fiscal years 2017-18 to 2020-21) totaling approximately \$1 billion to nine projects statewide as part of this program. These projects are valued at approximately \$3.5 billion.

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CTC SB1 Grant Highlights

• **\$247 million:** Funding for construction of toll-free carpool lanes on Interstate 5.

• **\$8.9 million:** For the new Vista Canyon Metrolink station in Santa Clarita.

• **\$2.7 billion:** Total amount allocated to 64 projects throughout the state.

Approval

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L.A. County projects receiving funding include:

- **The Airport Metro Connector 96th Street Transit Station Project In Los Angeles County:** This \$525.2 million project will create a multimodal transit station with a light rail station, transit station/terminal building, bus plaza, bicycle hub, pedestrian plaza, and passenger pick-up and drop-off.

The final approved project list, by county, for the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program can be found at http://catc.ca.gov/programs/sb1/sccp/docs/2018_Adopted_SCCP.pdf.

Trade Corridor Enhancement Program

California is the nation's largest gateway for international trade and domestic commerce, and freight movement generates about a third of California's \$2.2 trillion economy. Because of its importance and expected growth, SB 1 provides \$300 million annually for projects



In addition to Gov. Jerry Brown, speakers at the May Mobility 21 workshop on SB1 included (from left) Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, state Transportation Secretary Brian Annis, CTC Chair Fran Inman, and Metro CEO Phillip Washington. Photo: L.A. Metro

related to routes and infrastructure vital to California's trade and freight economy. Three years' worth of funding (fiscal years 2017-20) totaling approximately \$1.4 billion was awarded to 28 projects, valued at more than \$4 billion.

In addition to the I-5 project, other Southland projects receiving funding include:

- **The State Route 34 (Fifth St.) Rice Avenue Grade Sep-**

aration Project in Ventura County: This \$79 million project will grade separate the existing overcrossing and widen it from four lanes to six lanes; and install connector roads, signals, and sidewalks.

- **The State Route 57/60 Confluence Project: Choke Point Relief Program:** This \$288.6 million project will provide eastbound improvements, including interchange

modifications, auxiliary lanes and three new bridges.

The final approved project list, by county, for the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program can be found at http://catc.ca.gov/programs/sb1/tcep/docs/2018_Adopted_TCEP.pdf.

For complete details on SB 1, visit <http://www.rebuilding-ca.ca.gov/>

Grant

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ly from this grant which will address the endless traffic backups on Interstate 5. Anyone who lives or travels through the Santa Clarita Valley deals with this congestion on a daily basis. It impacts every vehicle traveling through or around Santa Clarita and throughout Southern California. This funding is a huge step in providing relief to everyone living and doing business in this region," said Knight. "Working with the Department of Transportation and a team of local leaders to secure this grant has been a top priority of mine for many months. I am so pleased to have spoken with Secretary Chao and to learn that she and the Department of Transportation fully understand and sup-

port the need for this project and the relief it will provide for our region as a whole."

According to the information provided by DOT, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority will receive funds to construct the Interstate 5 Golden State Chokepoint Relief Program project to improve Interstate 5 in North Los Angeles County. These funds will be used to extend high-occupancy vehicle lanes 13.4 miles from the State Route 14/I-5 interchange in the City of Santa Clarita to Parker Road in Castaic. The project will also allow for a 3.4-mile northbound truck lane between SR-14 and Calgrove Boulevard and a 4.7-mile truck lane between Pico Canyon and SR-14.

Securing this federal grant funding has been a partnership between local leaders including Supervisor Kathryn Barger, local city of Santa Clarita offi-

cials and others.

Barger had this to say about the about the funds headed to the district: "I appreciate the strong support of our local partners in the Santa Clarita Valley and the leadership of Rep. Steve Knight and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy in securing this important federal grant."

Santa Clarita Mayor Laurene Weste echoed the sentiment:

"The city of Santa Clarita has been privileged to be a member of the tremendous community and regional partnership supporting this important grant application," Weste said. "The entire City Council and I want to thank Congressman Steve Knight for his leadership and extraordinary efforts in successfully advocating for this outstanding project, which will significantly benefit the residents and businesses in our community."

NCTC JPA Formed, Lindenheim Appointed

The North Los Angeles County Transportation Coalition was first informally assembled by Supervisor Mike Antonovich in 1995 as a method of coordinating information and providing a forum for discussion on regional transportation issues of mutual interest and concern among the cities of Palmdale, Lancaster, Santa Clarita, and the unincorporated areas of North Los Angeles County. The cities and county have since met regularly to discuss transportation matters of mutual interest, including mobility improvement programs, transportation initiatives, and studies.

Recent legislative developments such as Measure M and SB1 gave the coalition cause to formalize into a joint powers author-

ity to ensure that transportation-related issues are collectively addressed and opportunities for our sub-region are seized. The JPA was officially formed at the NCTC Board meeting on Monday, May 14, 2018.

The North Los Angeles County Transportation Coalition is comprised of community leaders from the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Santa Clarita, and the County of Los Angeles.

Board Members

- County of Los Angeles: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Mark Pestrella, Victor Lindenheim Alternate: Dave Perry
- Palmdale: Steve Hofbauer, Juan Carrillo, Austin Bishop Alternate: James Purtee
- Lancaster: Marv Crist

(Chair), Ken Mann, Mark Bozigian

- Santa Clarita: Marsha McLean (Vice Chair), Robert Newman, Arthur Sohikian. Alternate: Bob Kellar.

Ex Officio Members:

- Antelope Valley Transit Authority: Norm Hickling
- Santa Clarita Transit: Adrian Aguilar

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- County of Los Angeles: Josie Gutierrez Alternate: Abu Yusuf
- Palmdale: Mike Behen Alternate: Jason Finch
- Lancaster: Trolis Niebla Alternate: Candice Vander Hyde
- Santa Clarita: Mike Henaway Alternate: Ian Pari
- Antelope Valley Transit Authority: Norm Hickling
- Santa Clarita Tran-



**Supervisor
Kathryn Barger**

Alternate: Adrian Aguilar

NCTC JPA MISSION

The mission of the JPA is to improve the movement of people and goods in the North Los Angeles County region through the development of policies and strategies that directly lead to the

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Pave

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Traffic fines are doubled in construction zones.

The Caltrans I-5 (Golden State Freeway) Roadway Rehabilitation Project is removing and replacing all of the concrete pavement in the right two lanes (No. 3 and 4 lanes) and repairing damaged sections of the left two lanes (No. 1 and 2 lanes) on I-5 from one-half mile south of State Route 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) to 1.7 miles north of Lake Hughes Road.

The expected completion date is fall 2019. Guy F. Atkinson Construction is the contractor. More information is available online at www.dot.ca.gov/d7/projects/5/5-rehab.html.



These lanes in the Newhall Pass are shown after being fully excavated in preparation for the new pavement. Photo courtesy of Caltrans

Gov. Brown Appoints Laurie Berman as New Caltrans Director

From Staff Reports and Caltrans News Release

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. has appointed Laurie Berman to serve as the director for the Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The March announcement came as Director Malcolm Dougherty announced his departure from public service to pursue other opportunities in the private sector.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to lead an agency that has a major impact to those who live, visit and do business in the state of California,” Berman said. “Transportation plays a vital role in the state’s economy and livability for every Californian, and I look forward to building on the great progress this department has made over the last several years.”

Berman had been serving as Caltrans’ acting chief deputy director since October 2017. Berman has a 34-year history with Caltrans serving in multiple roles in the department, including district director in the San Diego region where she oversaw the groundbreaking on the I-5 north coast corridor project, the successful delivery of the State Route 125 public/private partnership



Laurie Berman

project and improved mobility efforts along the California/Mexico Border.

Her appointment to director ensures that Caltrans will move forward seamlessly with its transportation priorities, and particularly with the commitments and plans that lie ahead for SB 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act.

“I am very confident that Laurie is the right person to lead Caltrans,” Dougherty said of his successor. “She’s been instrumental in delivering on the promise of SB 1 and will ensure a smooth transition for our hard-working staff and the public. I appreciate the leadership that she has exemplified in the San Diego region during her eight

‘She’s been instrumental in delivering on the promise of SB 1 and will ensure a smooth transition for our hard-working staff and the public.’

— Malcolm Dougherty

Former Caltrans Director

years as district director and know we are on the right path to continue serving Californians.”

Berman took the helm of the \$8.5 billion organization with nearly 20,000 employees, effective March 3.

“I’d like to thank Director Dougherty for his 25 years of dedicated public service,” said Brian Annis, secretary of the California State Transportation Agency. “Under his leadership, Caltrans has remained committed to efficient project delivery and safety, and remains a valued member of the transportation community with his years of service in various state and national organizations. Laurie has been actively engaged in the implementation of SB 1, as we look

to the future her leadership will guide the department as it continues its work to rebuild California.”

Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition, said Berman’s experience, in particular her role in implementing SB 1, bodes well for the coalition and the Interstate 5 improvement project.

“We congratulate Director Berman on her appointment,” Lindenheim said. “We’re looking forward to continuing to build upon the coalition’s strong relationship with Caltrans as the I-5 improvement project moves toward its next major phase, the construction of toll-free carpool lanes in northern Los Angeles County.”

JPA

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implementation of transportation projects and programs that address critical north county transportation issues,

promote economic development, and maximize transportation funding opportunities for member jurisdictions.

Ultimately, the authority will provide a vehicle for the member jurisdictions to prioritize and coordinate re-

gional transportation planning to build a more complete transportation system — connectivity — between the member jurisdictions.

By adopting the joint powers authority form, the NCTC gains legal authority

to access funding resources to carry out its mission. Its initial operating funding will be provided by Los Angeles County. NCTC is in the process of hiring a chief administrative officer — an executive director.

The Gateway Coalition and I-5 Improvements – A Short History

By **Tom DiPrima**
*Chairman,
Golden State Gateway Coalition*

It has been a long road — no pun intended — getting to where we are in the Gateway Coalition’s work to enhance safety, relieve congestion and improve goods movement in the Interstate 5 Corridor through North Los Angeles County.

In July 2002, a dedicated group of forward-thinking Santa Clarita Valley community leaders, recognizing the wide-ranging potential impact that growth in population and commerce would have on transportation in and through the valley, formed an organization to address the challenges posed and to maintain the quality of life we enjoy here. A mission was determined and a plan was developed to fund the work and establish a base of support. The following year, an executive director was hired to brand the Coalition, broaden its base of support and begin its advocacy and education campaign to achieve I-5 corridor improvements.

Soon after, a small team of top-notch technical and political consultants were



Tom DiPrima

brought in to help advance the project.

The Gateway Coalition’s core work continued, focusing on public support for the project, political support for the project and identifying and pursuing potential funding sources for the project. During the initial years, the Coalition’s membership increased four-fold. Partnerships were formed with local entities: the City of Santa Clarita, area town councils, the Chamber of Commerce, SCV Economic Development Corporation, Valley Industry Association of Santa Clarita, North County Transportation Coalition, and the (San Fernando) Valley Industry and Commerce Association. We reached out and worked with elected representatives at the city, county, state and national levels. Critical partnerships were established with the lead transportation agencies: LA County Metro, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration. There were trips to downtown LA, Sacramento and Washington, D.C., to advocate for our project.

And results were achieved. Environmental clearance for the I-5 Capacity Enhancement Project was completed in half the estimated time (2.5 years vs. 5 years) and at one-third less than the estimated cost (with savings to taxpayers of \$10.2 million). The first phase of I-5 improvements (reconfigured and widened footprint, truck lanes and retaining walls) was funded, designed, built and

‘Yes, we have had great success, but our work is not yet done...’

finally, opened to the public in December 2014. Now, pavement rehabilitation of the I-5 through the Santa Clarita Valley is under way and on target for completion by fall 2019. Design is also under way for the next, and most substantial I-5 improvements: 14 miles of toll-free carpool lanes, scheduled for a late 2019 start.

Yes, we have had great success, but our work is not yet done. The \$247 million grant recently awarded by the California Transportation Commission is dependent on SB-1 (“gas tax”) funding.

What happens in November with the repeal effort remains to be seen. We will also continue vigorous advocacy efforts for improvements to The Old Road, the alternative north-south route to I-5 through Santa Clarita, and for widening of the 36-mile western stretch of SR 138 where it connects to I-5.

Thank you for your support of the Gateway Coalition’s work. Our quality of life depends on it.

Hasley

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of the closed ramp at Sedona Way. This temporary ramp closure is part of a \$171 million construction project to replace and repair concrete lanes on nearly 16 miles of I-5 (see related story, page 3).

The on-ramp at Hasley Canyon Road is scheduled to generally remain open during construction though it will close

intermittently on some nights. It will reopen by 6 a.m. or earlier, Mondays through Fridays. The schedule is weather-permitting and subject to change.

When both on-ramps are closed, detour signs will be posted to direct drivers south on The Old Road about two miles to the next southbound I-5 on-ramp at Rye Canyon Road.

The I-5 Roadway Rehabilitation Project is removing and replacing all of

the concrete in the two right lanes (No. 3 and 4 lanes) and repairing damaged sections of the No. 1 and 2 lanes on I-5 from one-half mile south of State Route 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) to 1.7 miles north of Lake Hughes Road. The expected completion date is in fall 2019.

The public will see more pavement rehabilitation projects in the future as a result of SB 1, California’s new transportation funding plan.