

INTERCHANGE



News and updates from a coalition of community and business leaders focused on the health and vitality of California's transportation backbone — Interstate 5

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I-5 Funding in House Version of Highway Bill

\$1.5 million has been approved by the US House of Representatives to add a carpool lane and truck lane on Interstate 5 in Santa Clarita, California. According to Victor Lindenheim, Executive Director for the Coalition, "This is an important first step towards funding, and ultimately constructing the project championed by the Golden State Gateway Coalition. Now the U.S. Senate needs to come to the same conclusion, namely, that these roads need be built."

The legislation also includes the Cross Valley Connector in its list of "High Priority Projects," citing a \$5 million allotment for "8.5 miles of six and eight lane arterial roadways, building an essential east-west route across Santa Clarita Valley."

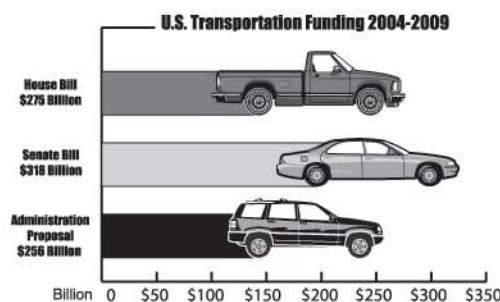
The Cross Valley Connector is a vital link from SR-14 to the Interstate 5 and SR-126. It will carry traffic across the Santa Clarita Valley, helping motorists avoid the frequently clogged SR-14 and Interstate 5, while alleviating congestion on key local roads in the Interstate 5 corridor.

Additional funds for the I-5 project are also being sought in a FY2005 Department of Transportation Bill with the assistance of Senator Barbara Boxer, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congressman Buck McKeon and the City of Santa Clarita. If and when secured, these funds would be applied towards environmental impact studies and initial design work by Caltrans.

Agreement Still Needed on Total Funding Level; Current Programs Extended

While differences are under discussion between Congress and the White House on a new national transportation bill, Congress has passed another extension to the current law. The current law expired on April 30. This action keeps active surface transit projects operating through June 30, 2004, and maintains the jobs of 5,000 Department of Transportation (DOT) employees.

Since the 1998 six-year national transportation bill (TEA-21) expired last October, Congress has approved three temporary stopgap measures to give lawmakers time to complete work on a long-term renewal. The House and Senate have approved two versions of a long-term bill (HR 3550 and S 1072), but at press time, conference committee members had not yet been appointed to reconcile differences.



The White House has said the President would veto any bill exceeding \$256 billion over the six-year period from 2004 through 2009. The Senate bill authorizes \$318 billion in transportation expenditures; the House version authorizes \$275 billion. The Safe, Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Act of 2004 (SAFETEA) passed in the Senate on February 12 by a vote of 78 to 12. The house approved their version of the transportation bill, known as the Transportation Equity Act: Legacy for Users (TEALU) on April 2 by a vote of 357 to 65.♦

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From the Executive Director

Challenges & Opportunities in 2004



This year we will be facing challenges that will test our patience with the state transportation funding system, and we will be seeking opportunities in Washington, D.C. to secure initial federal funding for I-5 improvements. Accordingly, we have added the services of a strategic consultant – Sarah Catz, California’s former Acting Deputy Secretary of Transportation — and we have

anticipated travel expenses in our budget to support these efforts. I made my first of at least two planned trips to Washington, D.C. in March. I also joined the LA Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for their Capitol Hill visits in mid-May.

In June, we will have the opportunity, along with the City of Santa Clarita, to provide California’s Transportation Commission with an overview of our area’s priority transportation projects: the I-5 and the Cross Valley Connector. The Commission was supposed to have met in Santa Clarita, but the meeting was suddenly moved to Los Angeles at the discretion of its chairman. And the Coalition’s regular communications with executive and transportation planning staff at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Caltrans, SCAG, and the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster will continue. We will also maintain our links with the

County Supervisor Mike Antonovich’s office and our elected representatives in Sacramento, including the Governor’s office, as we await the next cycle of state transportation funding. Things do change.

The Coalition began 2004 in good financial condition, its membership having doubled in 2003. The challenge will be to retain the support of current members and to attract new members, resulting in a broader membership base and an even stronger financial position.

We have developed and invested in collateral materials to raise the profile of both our I-5 improvement project and the Coalition itself. The first issue of our new quarterly newsletter, Interchange, has been distributed to members, prospective members, community leaders and government officials, and you are now reading our second issue. Two versions of a new DVD are now available for release. Other communication tools and programs to keep members and allies informed and involved are under development. Cooperation with allies and my participation as a speaker or guest in meetings and conferences germane to California transportation matters will continue.

So, as you can see, our emphasis this year will be on seeking initial funding for our project and maintaining and building the Coalition. Your support has been, and is, appreciated.

I look forward to a great year for the Golden State Gateway Coalition and its members.♦

Welcome New Coalition Members

Five new members have joined the Coalition this past quarter, bringing the Coalition roster up to 29. The new members are listed below:



Engineering • Surveying • Planning • Landscape Architecture

Hall & Foreman, Inc. (HFI), established in 1961, provides comprehensive civil engineering, land planning, development, and public works services for both the public and private sectors. The company is based in Irvine and maintains an office in Santa Clarita. HFI has joined the Golden State Gateway as an Associate Member and is represented by John Hogan, CEO and President.

Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital is a 217-bed not-for-profit community hospital and trauma center located in the heart of the Santa Clarita Valley. HMNMH is represented by its President and CEO Roger Seaver.



Henry Mayo
Newhall Memorial Hospital
Caring. Commitment. Community.



Quinn Shepherd Machinery is a full service Caterpillar dealer for Los Angeles, Orange and portions of Kern and Inyo Counties, providing a full range of new and used equipment for sale or rent. Jay Ervine, General Manager, Machines, based in Whittier, represents the company.

Valencia Acura is a full service dealer of new and pre-owned Acura vehicles. Don Fleming, who is co-owner of the dealership with his wife Cheri, will represent the company.

Valencia Acura



The Valley Industrial Association of Santa Clarita “involves and coordinates the Santa Clarita Valley business community by addressing issues of mutual interest that support economic and social vitality.” VIA has joined as an Associate member and is represented by Kathy Norris, its Executive Director. The Coalition recently participated in VIA’s Business-to-Business Industry Show as an exhibitor.♦

California Transportation Leader Profile

Sunne Wright McPeak

As Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, Sunne Wright McPeak directs California's largest government agency. Her 15 departments include such complex organizations as Caltrans, the CHP, DMV, and the Department of Corporations. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed her to the cabinet-level post in November of 2003.

Ms. McPeak was formerly President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. Prior to joining the Bay Area Council in November of 1996, Ms. McPeak served for three years as President and CEO of the Bay Area Economic Forum, a partnership formed in 1988 by the Bay Area Council and the Association of Bay Area Governments to facilitate public-private collaboration for promoting the regional economy.

Before the Bay Area Economic Forum, Ms. McPeak was a member of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors for more than 15 years. She was first elected to office in 1978 and served as Chairman several terms.

A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Ms. McPeak grew up on a dairy farm in rural Livingston in the San Joaquin Valley and holds a Master of Public Health degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

McPeak To Look At Job, Economic Impacts of Transportation Projects

In a press briefing on the Governor's budget earlier this year, Secretary McPeak acknowledged that the siphoning of \$1.1 billion in transportation funds to the general fund would halt or delay nearly 200 projects statewide. But she said the move was necessary to help get the state's fiscal house in order and make its economy competitive.

"First things first," McPeak said, supporting the Governor's argument that a balanced budget is paramount, and that all state agencies must bear the burden. She also said that the

administration is hoping it can start reinvesting in transportation projects at higher levels by next year, while focusing on projects now that have the best chance of boosting local economies. The estimated \$1.1 billion diverted from transportation accounts into the state general fund would come from existing gasoline taxes. The move essentially suspends a state constitutional amendment, proposition 42, approved by voters in 2002, that required funds from gasoline sales taxes to be used for transportation.

The amendment was written to allow those funds to be diverted into the general fund if the Governor declared a budget crisis, and if the legislature agreed by a two-thirds vote.

The state Transportation Congestion Relief Program, initiated by the prior administration at a time when there was a budget surplus, was also eliminated.

McPeak's staff will be analyzing and measuring transportation projects by a new standard: How will the project boost jobs and housing? She said that the state has to stop building transportation projects that don't reduce congestion and concentrate on projects that shorten commutes, create more efficient land use, and connect jobs and housing.

The goal, she said, is to focus on transportation projects that make business more competitive. According to McPeak: "We have not been getting enough return on our investments in this state from transportation projects." ♦

New Coalition DVDs Available

Safety. Efficiency. Congestion relief. Goods movement. Jobs. The economy. The case is made for improvements to I-5 and the facts for supporting the Coalition's efforts are all there in a new eight-and-a-half minute presentation in DVD format. The hard-

hitting presentation features interviews with federal, state and local officials and business leaders.

There are actually two versions of the DVD, and they are free for the asking. *Keep It Safe. Keep It Moving.* seeks support from elected and appointed government officials. *Who We Are. What We Do.* is geared towards prospective Coalition members in the business community. Contact the Coalition office at 661-775-0455 or vlinden@goldenstategateway.org for your copy. Please specify the version you would like, or you may request a copy of both versions.



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Improvements to I-5 Likely to be Included in Plan

It appears that the I-5 Santa Clarita-Los Angeles Gateway Improvement project will appear in the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Listing in the RTP is a critical step in the process of securing funding for design and construction of any major roadway project in Southern California.

A recent draft of the RTP listed several north county I-5 improvements in its appendix of unconstrained projects. Among them: HOV (commuter) lanes from SR-14 to SR-126; and truck climbing lanes from SR-14 to the Kern County line. Unconstrained projects are not part of the financially constrained RTP — that is, those projects that have a higher priority due to prior Federal environmental clearance, or current funding or programming commitments.

Every three years, the Southern California Association of Governments revises the Regional Transportation Plan with updated information and a new environmental clearance. The last updated plan was adopted by SCAG in April, 2001; the next RTP is scheduled for adoption this Spring.

The update reflects population, housing, employment, environmental, land-use forecasts and technology changes. This regional planning document is required by a number of state and federal mandates, including the federal Transportation Equity Act (the national highway and transit reauthorization bill), the Clean Air Act and the California Clean Air Act. The SCAG Regional Transportation Plan is a long-term "vision" document that outlines transportation goals, objectives, and policies for the SCAG six-county region.

Among the written comments supporting inclusion of the project in the RTP were those from Caltrans District 7, which said, in part, that: "The approved March 2003 PSR/PDS for I-5 between State Route 126 should be mentioned, for one HOV lane in each direction and one truck lane in each direction."

The North County Transportation Coalition (NCTC), its membership including the elected leadership of Los Angeles County's 5th District, and the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale and Santa Clarita, also weighed in on improvements to the I-5 in its comments on the RTP: "...we urge your inclusion of HOV lanes on the I-5 from SR-14 to SR-126 in the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan 2030 HOV System. We also request that you include the RTP Truck Climbing Lanes on the I-5 from the SR-14 to Calgrove Boulevard...these improvement projects will provide significant economic, congestion mitigation, and safety benefits to North Los Angeles County."

Connie Worden-Roberts submitted comments on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee and the Santa Clarita Valley Transportation Alliance. Letters were also sent by Valley Industrial Association (VIA) Executive Director Kathy Norris and VIA members David Hoffman and John Shaffery.♦

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For additions, deletions, change of address, or to receive this publication via e-mail please contact us at the address above or via e-mail at: vlinden@goldenstategateway.org.

