

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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Bond Issue on November Ballot?

Report and Analysis:

Infrastructure Bond Debate

The good news is that things have changed dramatically in just one year. The conversation in Sacramento has not been whether the State will invest in rebuilding infrastructure, but how much will be invested and for what. The bad news is that the lengthy conversations, intense negotiations and game efforts to get a substantial bond package on the June ballot have failed.



Governor's Proposal

In January, Governor Schwarzenegger proposed a \$68 billion package of general obligation bonds as part of a decade-long, \$222 billion plan for transportation, education, water, flood control, public safety and other projects. The Governor's initiative, the "Strategic Growth Plan (SGP)," included \$107 billion for transportation. Twelve-billion dollars of bonding was proposed – \$6 billion to be on the ballot in 2006, and another \$6 billion up for voter approval in 2008. The balance of the transportation program funding – \$95 billion – was to come from other sources, such as fuel excise tax and weight fees. Proposition 42 funds, private investment, revenue anticipation bonds and federal appropriations.

Gov. Schwarzenegger: "I didn't come to Sacramento because I expect things to be done easily."

Specific regional priority projects are suggested in the SGP, including HOV (carpool) lanes for the I-405 and the I-10 in Los Angeles. Criticism of the SGP came quickly from Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez (D-Los Angeles) and Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata (D-Oakland). "Not enough for transit...debt service could cut into education funds...we can't live with \$68 billion, we could live with \$25 or \$30 billion...should be a four year package, not 10 years."

Legislative Alternatives

Scaled-down legislative alternatives also emerged quickly. Funding for the transportation portion of Senator Perata's package (SB 1024) relied on \$5.4 billion in general obligation bonds and \$2.3 billion from Proposition 42. This alternative included proportionately higher expenditures for transit and rail. Speaker Nunez offered AB 1783. The draft bill expressed intent to fund goods movement, air quality programs, highway capacity improvements, public transportation and security. Initial details were hazy. State bond proposals, it should be noted, require a two-thirds majority of the legislature to pass.

By March, the Governor and the Democratic leadership were talking about passing a scaled-back \$49 billion plan in time for placement on the June ballot. There was Republican resistance to that package over its spending priorities. In the end, the Assembly approved a plan that only addressed levees and school construction. The Senate leadership declined to act on either measure. Now, the Governor and the legislature have until August to craft a compromise that would appear on the November ballot.

What About Goods Movement?

The Governor's Goods Movement Action Plan, released as a draft in December, 2005, focused on truck and rail corridors critical to commerce and the State's economic growth. It included the truck lane portion of the I-5 Gateway Project, endorsed as an "intermediate term" project, i.e., to be built in four to 10 years. Priority goods movement projects, we are told, were included in calculating the \$107 billion total needed for the Strategic Growth Plan.

So what does this mean for transportation investment in northern Los Angeles County? It's simply too early to tell. As we know, things change. But, I'll go out on a limb here and say that politics will continue to be a factor in this process. In the meantime, the Golden State Gateway Coalition is still on plan to move the I-5 Gateway Project to construction readiness as quickly as possible. Look for updates in future issues of Interchange. •

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From the Executive Director It's The System...



Victor Lindenheim

People ask me, "If the mission of the Gateway Coalition is to improve safety and mobility in northern L.A. County's Interstate 5 corridor, then why are you involved in supporting improvements to other roadway projects?"

"It's an interconnected system," I tell them. Think of it in biological terms: in order for a human body to function properly and remain healthy, blood needs to flow freely through arteries, veins and capillaries, bringing oxygen and nutrition to the body's vital organs. In the same way, a vital, free-flowing roadway system allows communities to flourish. Economic growth, cleaner air, security and improved quality of life are the by-products of an efficient roadway system – a system that allows vehicles to bring people, goods and services to their destinations in a reasonable amount of time.

Think of Interstate 5 as the backbone of our roadway system in northern Los Angeles County, carrying the greatest load, and encompassing the critical nerves and arteries that make the system work. The Cross Valley Connector, scheduled for completion in 2007, could well become the heart of the regional traffic pattern's circulatory system, moving vehicles to and from I-5 and the commuter-oriented Antelope Valley Freeway. The Antelope Valley Freeway (SR-14) could certainly use some help to ease its commuter-saturated lanes. Complete the system with an improved State Road 138, the east-west bypass from Interstate 5 to the Antelope Valley cities of Palmdale and Lancaster, and we will have a roadway

system connecting communities with healthy economies and happy people.

Getting to work, school and the doctor's office on time are not optional. For most local businesses, sending and receiving finished goods and supplies by truck are essential to their operations. Drive time matters most when saving lives is concerned, and public safety often depends on the ability of front line emergency responders to arrive at a location in time to do some good; in order to achieve all of this, we need a healthy transportation backbone – Interstate 5.

Our vision for northern L.A. County's transportation infrastructure, shared with community and business leaders, includes improvements to I-5, SR-14 and SR-138, as articulated in the 2004 North County Combined Highway Corridors Study. However, since our capabilities are limited by our resources, the Gateway Coalition focuses its resources on what we believe the Coalition can accomplish in a shorter timeframe.

We will continue to work with and support our allies to improve transportation in northern Los Angeles County. To our members: thank you for your investment in, and support of our efforts. ♦

Welcome New Members

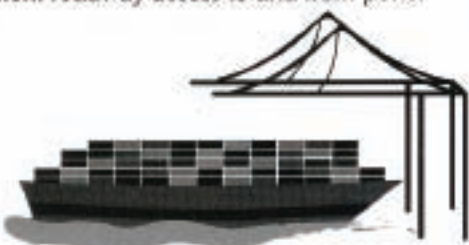
Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA)

Established in 1949, the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) is a private, non-profit business advocacy and lobbying association of businesses. The mission of VICA is to encourage the economic vitality and growth of the greater San Fernando Valley region and to define, promote and advocate the agenda of its business community.

Daniel Goetz (President, UltraViolet Devices, Inc.)



Dan's company is a manufacturer of UV drinking water disinfection systems. With manufacturing operations in China, Dan is particularly interested in efficient roadway access to and from ports.



Views from the Gridlock

My brother, a trucker, is often caught in commuter rush-hour traffic. One morning when everything came to a standstill, he sat high up in his 18-wheeler singing and whistling. A passenger in a nearby car, frustrated by the delay, yelled up at my brother, "What are you so happy about?" "I'm already at work!" he cheerfully replied.

– Contributed to "All In a Day's Work" by
Peter A. Lawrence



Interstate System Marks 50th Year

The year 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System. To be exact, it was on June 26, 1956 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Interstate Highway Act, the federal legislation that provided for the construction of this massive project. Based on the speedy Autobahns of Europe used by then General Eisenhower during World War II, the system now spans over 42,000 miles across the United States.

Transportation Progress Report

CVC Status

At press time, the section of **Newhall Ranch Road from Copperhill Drive to Interstate 5** was ready to go to construction. This portion of the project, involving relocation of utilities, is estimated for completion in 2007 at a cost of \$30 million.

Completion of the Cross Valley Connector segment (located further east) that crosses the Santa Clara River has been delayed pending resolution of a legal challenge on the environmental studies. The trial date has been rescheduled for April 13.

One Interchange Completed, Two Interchanges Funded

On December 14, Caltrans officials were joined by community leaders in a ceremony to mark completion of the new **I-5/SR-126 Interchange**. Connie Worden-Roberts represented and spoke for the Golden State Gateway Coalition at the event.

At their December meeting, the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board assured us that the Interstate **5/SR-14 Carpool Lane Interchange** will stay on schedule, despite an expected \$45.6 million cost increase. The project, originally estimated to cost \$126.6 million, is in the design stage, and scheduled for a 2009 completion date.

In February, The LA County Board of Supervisors approved a funding agreement that will clear the way for the \$33.7 million **Interstate 5/Hasley Canyon Road Interchange** improvement project in the Castaic area. The agreement calls for Newhall Land to invest \$20.6 million in the project and to perform the preliminary engineering. The balance of the funding will come from developer fees (\$6.8 million) and a grant from the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (\$6.3 million). Caltrans will provide construction oversight for the project, which is scheduled for completion in 2008.

Transit Plan for Santa Clarita

The City of Santa Clarita is in the process of updating its public transportation development plan, looking ahead from 2006 through 2015. The plan will include an evaluation of transit service needs and a corresponding financial plan.

Included in the scope of the Plan's research are Newhall, Canyon Country, Saugus, Valencia and neighboring unincorporated communities. A public participation meeting regarding the plan was held on March 18 at City Hall. •

How the Rubber (Eventually) Meets the Road



The following Q & A looks at key elements in the process of funding a freeway project in southern California. It is based on a feature article by LA Times staff writer Caitlin Liu, that was published in the Times on February 13, 2006. The original article, "Governor's Plan Targets Southland Traffic Hot Spots", is available for purchase at www.latimes.com.

Why, in the Strategic Growth plan, did the Governor single out specific freeway projects over others in the region?

Among the projects listed in his proposal were: adding a northbound carpool lane to the I-405 freeway between the I-10 and the Hwy-101; and improving the Carmenita Road interchange along the I-5 near Norwalk. According to Caltrans Director Will Kempton, the Governor picked these projects because he believed that they would do the most to relieve congestion.

Do regional planners and transportation agencies agree with the Governor's plan?

It depends upon the county. Orange County is thrilled with the Governor's \$320 million recommendation for the congested SR-91 freeway.

The reaction from Los Angeles County has been mixed. Some of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's freeway project priorities are included in the SGP; mass transit funding is not. Under Governor Schwarzenegger's plan, subject to the Legislature's approval, the California Transportation Commission ultimately would have the power to decide which projects to fund.

Who decides which freeway projects get built?

Generally, Caltrans makes all decisions regarding highway maintenance, repairs and safety. Decisions on whether to add roadway capacity are mostly made by local agencies, such as MTA, with input from Caltrans.

Before a project becomes eligible for funding, it must be part of long range plans developed by agencies such as MTA. In assembling these plans, MTA looks at a project's ability to improve mobility, reduce pollution, save commuting time and provide access to employment centers.

Once a project makes it onto a region's long-range plan, it must compete for funding. For freeway projects, MTA planners consider criteria such as how well the project fits into the existing transportation network, project costs and how close the project is to being ready for construction.

Where does the funding come from and what role does "politics" play?

Most major transportation projects are funded through a mix of local, state and federal dollars. But a proposal – no matter how worthy – goes nowhere without funding. That's where "politics" comes into play.

Take the case of the I-405 carpool lane, which last year received a \$130-million federal earmark. Rep. Howard Berman, whose district includes a portion of the project, led the effort to secure those funds. The carpool lane was already among the region's top transportation priorities, but the additional funding means that the construction can begin sooner. •

California Transportation Leader Profile

Gary Cusumano, Founding Director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition

Webster defines a farmer as one who "uses the land to grow crops." Gary Cusumano is a businessman-farmer, who has expanded his horizons and achievements to grow the best-known company in the Santa Clarita Valley, yielding harvests of new homes, commercial and retail centers, parks, roadways and preserved open space. It can be said that no other entity has had more of an impact on, and made a greater contribution to the quality of life

in the Santa Clarita Valley than Newhall Land. And, in recent years, no other individual has made more of an impact on the company than its leader.

His 36-year career with Newhall Land began in 1969. After holding various positions in the company's agricultural and real estate divisions, he was appointed President & COO in 1989, and Chief Executive Officer in 2001. By 2004 he was named Chairman, officially retiring from Newhall Land by January 2006.

When you're in Valencia, you know it; and that is definitely a good thing. Gary Cusumano, the recently retired Chairman & CEO of Newhall Land is known for many things...and leading the team that built the planned community of Valencia surely stands out among those achievements.

Transportation is a key consideration in the planning and building of a new community. And, in Valencia, Gary Cusumano and his team led by example.

Valencia's quiet neighborhood streets feed into collector streets, which feed to arterial streets. The result is that through traffic is where it should be: not in the neighborhoods, but on larger streets designed with turn pockets, signals and extra lanes to better handle the traffic flow. In newer communities, "traffic calming" roadway designs – such as traffic circles – make sure neighborhood traffic is what it should be: free flowing, but moderately paced.

With Gary Cusumano at the helm, Newhall Land has committed over \$60 million for I-5 freeway improvements and another \$60 million for local road projects. Through its participation in the Santa Clarita Valley Transportation Alliance, Newhall Land is working to hasten the following local road improvements, which are either complete or are scheduled for completion within the next few years:

- Extension of Decoro Avenue from McBean Pkwy. to Avenue Tibbets.
- Extension of Newhall Ranch Road from I-5 to Copperhill Drive.
- Widening of Magic Mountain Parkway from I-5 to McBean Parkway
- Replacing the Santa Clara River Bridge on I-5
- Replacing the I-5 bridges over Magic Mountain Parkway and improving the on- and off-ramps
- Improving the interchange at I-5/SR-126 by increasing it from four to eight lanes

- Constructing a new interchange on SR-126 at Commerce Center Drive
- Replace bridge and improve interchange on I-5 at Hasley Canyon over-crossing.

Once complete, Newhall Ranch Road will provide new access and egress to and from I-5 and SR-126 for the northern part of the valley; it will also improve access for the 18,000 employees of the Valencia Industrial Center. Ultimately, when the connection to Copperhill Drive is done (circa 2007), Newhall Ranch Road will serve as the valley's "Cross-Valley Connector," providing a direct east-west connection between I-5 and SR-14.

Gary is one of the founding directors of the Golden State Gateway Coalition and served three years as its first chairman and president. The Coalition is dedicated to improving mobility and safety in northern Los Angeles County's Interstate 5 corridor. Starting with a core group of 15 organizations and individuals in 2002, the Coalition now has more than 50 members, and a \$1.6 million authorization from the U.S. Congress to begin the process of adding truck and carpool lanes to Interstate 5 in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Now Gary Cusumano is in transition: from impressive career accomplishments and selfless community service to a well-deserved position of doing what he wants, when he wants. A grateful community offers congratulations to him for a job well done and thanks for taking Valencia (and its transportation infrastructure) from a vision into a reality shared and enjoyed by current and future generations. ♦

Transportation Advocacy Dates

April 10, NCTC Meeting: The North County Transportation Coalition will meet in Santa Clarita. An advisory body appointed by County Supervisor Michael Antonovich, the NCTC ensures coordination of transportation programming priorities in northern Los Angeles County. Gateway Coalition members Tom DiPrima (KB Home) and Connie Worden-Roberts (SCV Transportation Alliance) serve as voting members along with north county Mayors Jim Ledford, Frank Roberts and Laurene Weste.

April 30 - May 3, Washington, D.C. Fly-In: Under the aegis of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce, community and business leaders will visit with legislators and federal agency officials to discuss funding for transportation, health care, education, and environmental needs in the Santa Clarita Valley. Contact the Chamber for details at (661) 702-6977.

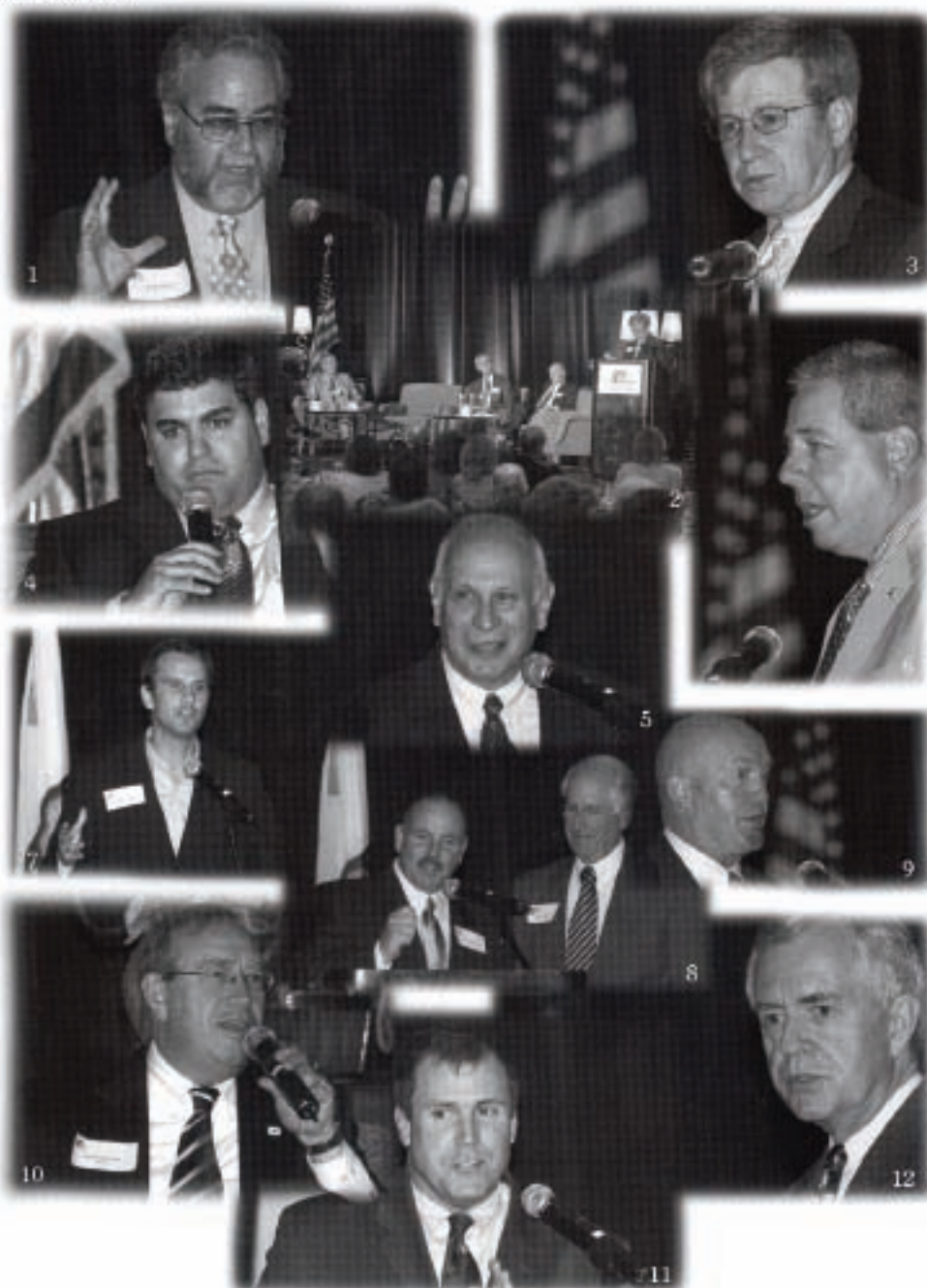
May 15-18, Access D.C.: The L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce leads an annual delegation of business and community leaders and public officials to Washington, D.C., to meet with members of the Administration and Congress, to discuss items that are important to the prosperity of the L.A. region. Transportation is prominent on the agenda. For information call Brendan Huffman at (213) 580-7531.

2005 North LA County Transportation Forum

Moderator Dan Beal (Automobile Club of Southern California) summed it up: "In just a year, we've gone from a position of relative hopelessness - wondering how we would be able to move transportation projects forward - to a situation where new funding opportunities are real and imminent..."

The context for the 2005 North Los Angeles County Transportation Forum included \$13.4 million in recent federal funding authorizations for at least three north county projects (the Cross Valley Connector, the I-5 Gateway Improvement Project and the Avenue P widening project in Palmdale), restoration of Proposition 42 funds for transportation investment and a new "buzz" about infrastructure investment, public/private partnerships and design-build.

Forum speakers and panelists included California State Senator George Runner; Caltrans District 7 Director Doug Failing; Michael Cano and Bob Haueter from Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich's office; Mike Lawson of Transportation California; and Bart Reed of The Transit Coalition. *



All Forum photos by: Steve Fleetwood.

1. Bart Reed (The Transportation Coalition), 2. The Forum Panel, 3. Sen. George Runner, 4. Michael Cano, Supervisor Antonovich's Transportation Deputy, 5. Victor Lindenheim, Gateway Coalition, 6. Bob Haueter, representing Supervisor Antonovich, 7. Cameron Smyth, 2005 Mayor of Santa Clarita, 8. Coalition Chairman Tom Di Prima (KB Home) and Chairman Emeritus Gary Cusumano (Newhall Land), 9. Mike Lawson (Transportation California), 10. Doug Failing (Caltrans District 7 Director), 11. Scott Wilk (Congressman McKeon's District Director), 12. Dan Beal, Forum Moderator (Automobile Club of Southern California)

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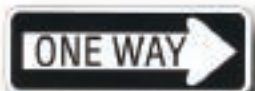
McKeon Chairs House Education Committee



On February 15, Rep. Howard P. Buck McKeon (R-CA) was named to serve as Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The appointment was made after a vote by all of the Republican Members of the House, pursuant to a recommendation of the House G.O.P. Steering Committee.

This is a great honor and a great challenge, said McKeon. I am obviously pleased and flattered that my colleagues selected me for this opportunity. I hope to work with Members on both sides of the aisle to fashion legislation that will truly meet the needs of the 21st century economy.

In his new leadership position as a full committee chairman, the Congressman's impact on the House's legislative agenda will be elevated, including transportation-related matters. ♦



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