

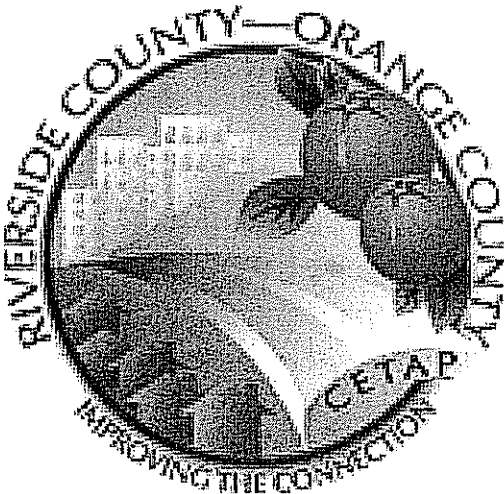
Issue No. 19 – April 4, 2005

Commission Receiving Input on Riverside to Orange County Alternatives

The Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Orange County Transportation Authority are currently in the midst of a public outreach effort to receive comments on a number of transportation improvement alternatives to ease travel between the two counties. The outreach effort is part of an 18-month Major Investment Study that will conclude at the end of this year.

A total of 12 potential improvement strategies have been identified that are intended to expand travel capacity between Orange and Riverside counties by at least 220,000 vehicle trips per day. Providing for at least that much capacity is necessary in order to address transportation needs for the next three decades.

Unfortunately, there is no single improvement project that can add 220,000 vehicle trips. For example, the 91 Freeway would have to be widened to a total of 11 lanes in each direction to meet the area's travel needs in 2030. Given that reality, an effective traffic improvement strategy for travel between Orange and Riverside counties, will likely require a combination of improvements such as widening of Route 91, additional public transit options such as more Metrolink trains and express buses, and the development of a brand new highway corridor to provide another travel alternative.



In order to address this need, the MIS study project team has identified five travel corridors for detailed analysis. Widening the existing Route 91 is one corridor. Safety improvements to Route 74 and three new corridors serving various locations are also being considered. Since two of the new corridors would traverse the Cleveland National Forest, a number of options including tunnels, bridges and surface options are being studied. A total of 12 combinations have been created that incorporate improvements on Route 91, transit enhancements and one of the new corridors.

For detailed information and a chance to provide your input on these alternatives, please go to www.rccconnection.info. You can also attend a public meeting on Thursday, April 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the Lake Elsinore Cultural Center, 183 N. Main Street, Lake Elsinore.

Route 60 HOV Lanes Open; New Project on Tap

A local orchestra, a throng of elected officials and a solid turnout from the community of Moreno Valley celebrated the opening of new HOV Lanes on Route 60. The project was opened on the morning of March 18, more than eight months ahead of its original construction schedule.

The new HOV lanes span a stretch of six miles between Pigeon Pass Road and Redlands Boulevard. Along with the HOV Lanes the project replaced the freeway overpass at Perris Boulevard. While a minor amount of work remains to be completed, a number of motorists have noticed a positive effect on the eastbound afternoon commute.

As work begins to wrap up on the Moreno Valley area of Route 60, state approvals have been granted to add a general purpose lane and an HOV lane in each direction on Route 60 in Mira Loma between Valley Way and Interstate 15. This project would close a gap on Route 60 near Ontario International Airport.

Construction on the project will begin by the end of this year. The majority of funding will come from RCTC's share of federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program funds; however the Commission has had to advance local funding to ensure the project stays on track in spite of the state's budget problems.



COMMISSION Connection



Mayer Steps Down; Tavaglione Reappointed

Caltrans District 8 Director Anne Mayer, who also serves as an ex-officio member of the Riverside County Transportation Commission has announced her resignation effective April 30. Mayer has served as District Director for more than four years and is stepping down to evaluate a number of career opportunities.

As a Caltrans District Director, Mayer proved to be especially valuable to RCTC on a wide array of projects. One example is the 60/91/215 project.

The project continues to be the state's largest design sequencing project and has remained on schedule in spite of financial challenges.

In other statewide transportation news, Riverside County will continue to have a representative on the state's Transportation Commission (CTC) with the reappointment of local businessman Joseph Tavaglione. Tavaglione currently serves as the Chairman of the CTC and was first appointed in 2002.

Upcoming Meetings and Information

The Riverside County Transportation Commission will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, April 13, at the Riverside County Administrative Center, Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, First Floor, 4080 Lemon Street, Riverside at 9:00 a.m.

RCTC also maintains a speaker's bureau that actively makes presentations throughout the county on transportation issues. If you are interested in scheduling a presentation for your service club, community group or any other organization, please contact John Standiford at (951) 787-7141 or e-mail him directly at jstandiford@rctc.org.

Grade Crossing Study Begins

With rail traffic continuing to increase throughout Southern California and especially in Riverside County, RCTC will be updating its list of priority railroad grade crossings in need of funding.

A consultant has been hired to review 58 railroad crossings throughout the county and rank them based on criteria considering seven factors. Of the seven factors, vehicle delay (both existing and future) and safety are weighted as most important.

RCTC is working with other transportation commissions in Southern California to obtain federal funding for grade crossings. The development of the priority list will help guide future funding decisions.