

COMMUNITY *connection* 101

THE VENTURA/SANTA BARBARA U.S. 101 HOV PROJECT NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO COMMUNITY CONNECTION 101

This newsletter is your connection to news and information about the proposed California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) U.S. 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Project in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Each issue will have information about upcoming community meetings, progress updates, project schedule and how you can provide your input or obtain more information. Articles about how neighboring communities are participating in shaping the project will also be featured. We invite you to stay “connected” as we work to make traveling the U.S. 101 safer and faster.

THE PROJECT AND PURPOSE

The Ventura/Santa Barbara U.S. 101 HOV Project proposes to construct an HOV lane northbound and southbound in the existing median area. As shown in the map to the right, the proposed project limits are Ventura County west of Mobil Pier Undercrossing to 0.44 miles south of Casitas Pass Road in Santa Barbara County. This 6-mile project would provide 6 lanes, 3 northbound and 3 southbound to reduce congestion and increase the freeway’s capacity to move people and goods safer and faster. Other design features of the project include improvements to bikeways and pedestrian access.



Caltrans District 7 (covering Los Angeles and Ventura Counties) is leading the project with support from District 5 (covering Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties) and other agencies including the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG). The project is estimated to cost \$151 million in Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funds.

PROJECT PURPOSE:

TO REDUCE CONGESTION AND INCREASE THE FREEWAY'S CAPACITY TO MOVE PEOPLE AND GOODS SAFER AND FASTER.

Environmental & Technical Studies Underway

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is in the process of preparing technical studies and an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) to address the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

On August 28, 2007, a scoping meeting was held with local jurisdictions, agencies and community stakeholders to identify issues, concerns and ideas about alternatives to be studied in the environmental process. As a result of the scoping process, the following alternatives are now being given further analysis:

Alternative 1: The "No Build" Alternative

This will maintain the current configuration of the existing freeway. HOV lanes would not be added. Congestion and operational problems in this segment would not be alleviated.

Alternative 2: The Minimum Build Alternative

- Construction of 12-foot wide northbound and southbound High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in the existing median area.
- Implementation of varying road shoulder widths that could include sections with minimum of 2-foot wide inside shoulders and minimum of 7-foot wide outside shoulders.

Alternative 3: The Full Build Alternative

- Construction of 12-foot wide northbound and southbound High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in the existing median.
- Implementation of standard 10-foot wide inside median and standard 10-foot wide outside shoulder.
- Inside widening at Bates Road undercrossing to accommodate 10-foot wide inside median; outside widening and extension of existing culverts on the northbound side of roadway within State right of way may be required.

COMMON DESIGN FEATURES FOR ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3

- Construct a Pedestrian Undercrossing (PUC) in the community of La Conchita to improve beach access.
- Close existing median openings at Mussel Shoals, La Conchita and Tank Farm.
- Install Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) vehicle detectors, Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) and Changeable Message Signs (CMS) as appropriate.
- Remove and replace medal beam guard rail with concrete barriers.
- Install soundwalls and retaining walls, as required.
- Convert the existing auxiliary lane and/or mixed flow lane located near the U.S. 101/S.R. 150 separation to accommodate the HOV lane.
- A Class I bikeway within State right of way and/or a Class II bikeway separated from traffic lane are being considered for feasibility as design options.

PROPOSED PROJECT SCHEDULE

Environmental Scoping	Completed October 2007
Public Outreach Meetings	April - July 2008
Public Hearing	September 2008
Final Environmental Document	November 2008
Design Phase Complete	February 2010
Start Construction	Winter 2011
Construction End	Summer 2015



We're here to get you there!



STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS HELP SHAPE PROJECT

Caltrans has hosted a series of stakeholder meetings with La Conchita and Mussel Shoals residents and bicycle groups who have helped identify concerns and ideas to improve safety for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Participants were shown displays of the project, asked questions of Caltrans staff and gave positive feedback on proposed improvements. Overall, stakeholders were supportive of the project purpose and had specific comments about bikeways, on-and-off ramps, pedestrian undercrossings and parking. Stakeholders are learning more about the project in interactive sessions and providing input to Caltrans. Other briefings are planned for the Vista De Santa Barbara Mobile Home Park and the Villa Del Mar Home Owners Association condominium development in Carpinteria.

What We Heard From the Community

La Conchita residents met on April 29, 2008 and supported proposed improvements which increase safety for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Positive comments were received about closing the left hand turn medians entering and leaving La Conchita and the new pedestrian undercrossing which will provide safe beach access. They also supported other improvements such as longer acceleration and deceleration lanes to help vehicles exit and enter the highway safely. Caltrans clearly heard the community's opposition to the obstruction of their ocean view by the proposed soundwalls.



Mussel Shoals residents met on April 30, 2008 and likewise had many positive comments about improvements to the entrance to their community aimed at increasing safety and access for cars, trucks and bicyclists. Residents support widening the entrance, longer deceleration lanes, posting signage and flashing beacons to caution drivers to slow down and direct traffic. They also support new soundwalls to help reduce traffic noise for residents near the highway while maintaining visibility for the Cliff House Inn.

Bicycle Groups met on February 13, 2008 and June 12, 2008 and shared their enthusiasm for improvements to provide a Class 1 bikeway. The proposed design would feature a separated 8-foot bikeway with two-way traffic from just north of Seacliff to the Bates Road off-ramp. The bikeway would be separated by a concrete barrier at the edge of the travel way. The group also supported keeping the existing southbound Class 1 bikeway from the U.S. 101/S.R. 150 on-ramp to the Seacliff off-ramp.



Please Join Us!

PUBLIC HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

As required under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Caltrans is holding a public hearing to allow public comment on the 101 Ventura/Santa Barbara HOV Project Initial Study /Environmental Assessment (IS/EA).

The hearing will be held:

Date: **September 9, 2008**
Time: **6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**
Place: **Carpinteria Middle School
5351 Carpinteria Avenue
Carpinteria, CA 93013**

OUR PROJECT PARTNERS:



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